

Politics, again....

But this time, we have a winner! Raphael T. (Raphi) Rosenblatt is President of HaNegev Region USY, United Synagogue Youth. HaNegev Region stretches from North Carolina to Puerto Rico and Raphi was competing against teens from much larger Jewish environments, including metro Miami and Atlanta. But he showed them a small town boy can do it and carried the day.

That election made it all the more meaningful for Raphi when he took the trip he'd been planning all year, Israel Pilgrimage. It's a six week commitment, one week in Poland, five weeks in Israel. Last year over 600 teens went. This year, only 351 attended. Where there would have been over 50 in his group alone, the number is down to 31. But those who made the commitment to attend are having a more meaningful experience, seeing how Israelis cope day to day, than if they were just part of a tour group. We get periodic phone calls from Raphi updating us plus there's a daily website sponsored by USY telling us what the Pilgrims are doing.

At the same time, I'll be glad when he's home safe. People say "aren't you scared?" and I am, but I also know stuff happens everywhere. A friend of ours, mother of one of Raphi's classmates, was driving her car down the road when a tree fell on it. It broke her neck and she's now in rehab in Miami trying to determine if she'll regain use of her limbs. So you can't keep everyone safe all the time, but if anything I know USY is being hypervigilant this year to try and keep the kids safe.

Micah's just returned from summer camp where he spent four weeks hiking, camping and discussing THE BIG LEBOWSKI, a cult favorite among the campers and staff. Micah's also become more religious in an interesting kind of way. He doesn't want to turn lights on and off on the Sabbath (should I credit THE BIG LEBOWSKI? "I'm *shomer shabbas*, dammit! I don't f*ckin' bowl on *shabbas*!") and he's started wearing a *tallit katan*, the fringed undershirt worn by

**GUILTY
PLEASURES
19
For SFPA 222
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Orthodox Jewish men. So we'll see where it goes.

While the boys were gone Howard and I took advantage of their absence to take our anniversary trip. I may have mentioned Howard wanted to take me to Paris for our 25th, and as touched as I was by this romantic gesture when I gave it some serious thought I had doubts. We don't speak French. One of us is not an "easy" traveler (you know--there are some people who when things go wrong they say it's part of the travel experience, and others who when things go wrong go ballistic?) We eat kosher food. And Howard's very sensitive to cigarette smoke. So on reflection, I decided it might be more enjoyable (for me, anyway) to stay closer to home.

We finally decided with the help of our travel agent to go to NYC and Quebec City. The first was Howard's idea. I had never been to NYC and he thought it was high time I went. I know, I know, that makes me sound like the world's biggest hick, but it just never happened. My family's from the Midwest and entered the US via Galveston, so I don't even have ties to Ellis Island. So we flew into Newark, took over an hour to navigate through midtown traffic and finally made it to the Benjamin Hotel at Lexington and E. 50th.

The Benjamin was recommended to us by our travel agent and I was very pleased with her choice. It's an Art Deco gem recently renovated and now offering luxury accommodations in a more intimate setting than the huge, better known hotels. There was a menu of pillow choices with 10 different selections--everything from different firmnesses in down to buckwheat hull to neck rolls. Because of its location in the financial district the hotel also wasn't touristy, but more business oriented so it was quiet and "adult" unlike our second choice, the Marriott Marquis on Times Square. And for midtown their rates were competitive, though it still made me blanch to realize how much a night



in the city costs.

So once we were settled at the Benjamin we took off to get a bite to eat. On the recommendation of our concierge we hiked over to the Garment District for some kosher deli at Ben's, a small chain in the city area. Ben's is open on the Sabbath through a special arrangement where the restaurants are "sold" and repurchased each week. Some high sticklers won't go along with this, but it was fine by our standards and the food was everything we'd hoped for from a classy deli. I had the chicken fricassee, one of the house specialties, and Howard had a deli sandwich. I left Howard at the end of the meal (he needed to stop by the MONY offices to pick up some applications for a client) to stand in line at the TKTS booth on Times Square and see what discounted shows were available that night. I knew better than to even ask about THE PRODUCERS, but was somewhat disappointed that CHICAGO wasn't available. So we ended up with two half price tickets to THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE with Linda Lavin, Michelle Lee and Tony Roberts.

TALE was in the Barrymore Theater, a little jewelbox of a setting that worked quite well for this intimate comedy. However I wouldn't recommend TALE unless you like humor about New York Jews on the Upper West Side. It's the kind of play New Yorkers would *kvell* over but propane dealers from Topeka might scratch their heads at it.

The next day Howard had arranged to meet some clients, and that was OK with me. I told him that I'd seen the most amazing thing as I was walking through the Diamond District. Naturally that announcement made him blanch, until I told him we'd passed Gotham Book Mart on our way to the theater. So we avoided the Benjamin's way overpriced restaurant and scooted around the corner to Ess A Bagel for breakfast, read the New York Times (with Howard grouching about the lack of comics) and then went our separate ways.

I spent a wonderful morning in the Gotham Book Mart, since 1920 a treasure trove of new and used books. I could have spent all day there. And then some. But I managed to leave with only three selections, two pirate research books for me and a collection of Broadway anecdotes for Raphi.

I took my time heading back to the hotel, knowing Howard as I do--he plans to only spend an hour with the client but things happen and they get to talking--and that's OK, 'cause now I know what to expect. I walked back to the hotel down 5th Avenue, pausing to do a bit of window shopping, strolled past St. Patrick's Cathedral and generally admired the hustle and bustle of New York streetlife.

I had mentioned to a friend in the course of the visit how rude New Yorkers seemed to a Southern gal like me. Debbie thought about it a bit and said "I don't think they're rude so much as crowded and time bound. See, if you have 45 minutes for lunch, you have to race down to the corner deli and the counter is 20 people deep. So of course you're going to yell out your order and push, rather than politely wait your turn. If you did that you'd never get fed!"

Dodging the cars was also an interesting experience. New York drivers apparently don't



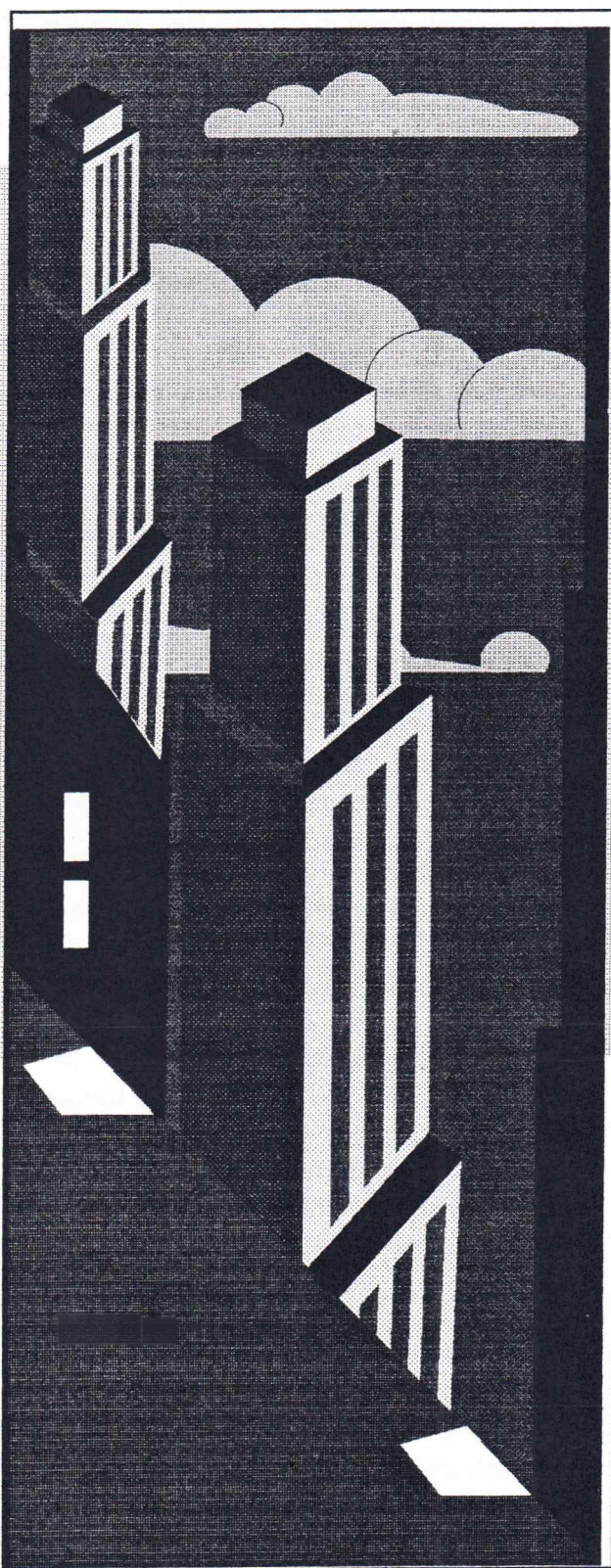
follow the same rules regarding “walk” signs and pedestrian crossways as drivers in other parts of the country and I learned very quickly to recall a lesson from my childhood— “a stop sign never stopped a car.”

When Howard returned from his business appointments it was almost suppertime. I was in the Benjamin’s lounge, enjoying a quiet moment and catching up on the newspapers and letter writing and we were soon ready to walk over to the Sony Building for dinner at Shallots.

Shallots is an upscale kosher restaurant, something that a generation ago would almost have been an oxymoron. Janice has eaten at their Chicago branch and the NYC one is relatively new and still garnering mixed reviews. But I thought it was wonderful. Our waitress started telling us about the fish specials of the day and I interrupted her and said “No. I do not want to hear about the fish. I do not want to hear about the vegetarian plate. I want to hear about meat and only meat.” We explained to her about living in a small town where eating out when you keep kosher means vegetarian or dairy pasta or fish. The hardest part about eating in a restaurant like Shallots is making a choice. We’re so used to being restricted to one or two items on the menu that being able to eat anything borders on sensory overload.

But I persevered and ended up with the Moroccan marinated duck, while Howard got the rack of lamb. Both were beautifully prepared, though I had to practically tie Howard down and convince him not to order the lamb well done. For dessert we split a “black hat”, a chocolate confection that was so rich eating one by yourself would have been a sin. It’s also a small joke, since very religious Jews are sometimes called “black hats” because of their attire.

The next day we took the subway to the Lower East Side so Howard could shop for his new *tallit* (prayer shawl), which was my 25th Anniversary gift to him. Much of the Lower East Side has become home to ethnic



groups other than European Jews--now you see more signs in Oriental characters than Hebrew characters, but it still has a core group of Jewish bookstores and gift shops, most of them so crowded and disorganized it's a wonder anybody finds anything. But the merchants are there to make sales, so they can put their hands on the merchandise even if it looks like chaos central to the customer. The problem was Howard wanted, as he put it, "something different" without quite knowing what that "different" was. I helped by eliminating the more common mass market models--the Jerusalem design, the Ziontalis tribes design, etc. And we knew it would be a full sized "wrap" model, not a scarf style worn over the neck. Then we narrowed it down to something with color, or a non-white background. Since Howard's current model was the "P'nai Or" (bright multi-colored stripes on a white background) we knew he wasn't getting that. And my attitude was to shrug and say "Get whatever makes you happy. I'm not planning on buying again for another 25 years." So he finally picked out two models, and since he couldn't decide I bought them both. *Tallit* #1 is for everyday and Sabbath use, an iridescent gray with black edging and silver stripes. The feedback at our synagogue has been "isn't that a little young and *avant garde* for you, Howard?" He loves it. *Tallit* #2 is a new one for the High Holidays, a very fine lightweight white wool shot through with gold embroidered stripes. They both look very fetching on him. Afterwards we strolled around a bit and bought pickles from the barrel at Gussies, and yes, it was after we crossed Delancey Street.

On the way back we grabbed a bite to eat and picked up a bottle of scotch 'cause we were going to a cocktail party that evening hosted by a writer friend of mine, Rob Byrnes.

You may have noticed a new line of humorous gay fiction from Kensington Press? Rob is one of their writers and his novel *UPPER WEST SIDE STORY* should be out this Fall. It had originally been published by Dreams Unlimited in e-book format, but now Rob's getting the full treatment--hardcover, paperback, publicity, the works.



Rob lives on the upper *east* side on Lexington, a short subway hop from our hotel. We got there early enough to walk around and see the neighborhood and I got a taste of what makes city life attractive for these folks. Everything is near to hand. Within a few blocks you've got all your service providers, restaurants, groceries and everyone delivers. It's attractive to think that if you want something you don't have to get in your car and drive 10 miles to the mall to get it.

Rob's apartment, which he shares with a woman friend, is a 1920's jewel renovated and filled with Art Nouveau and Art Deco pieces, some antiques and some reproductions. The party was a mix of lawyers, writers, and Rob's friends and I heard some great gossip about people who frequent New York's gay party scene (names *were* dropped), about writers we knew and about the publishing industry. And as Howard put it there were enough lawyers there that he had folks to talk to also. We ended up staying much later than we expected, which killed out plans to go to Le Marais, another highly recommended kosher restaurant. As I told Howard later, "we haven't been able to do half the things we wanted to! We need to come back!"

One thing we did do though was visit the Jewish Museum the next day. The Museum in and of itself is a stunning sight, housing many items and paintings I'd seen in reproduction. But it was especially wonderful because they're hosting a Chagall exhibit.

Virtual reality is fine, but being able to see the real thing, brush strokes and all, is a totally different experience. We could have spent all day there but it was Friday and we needed to get over to the Bronx for the Sabbath, so we reluctantly tore ourselves away.

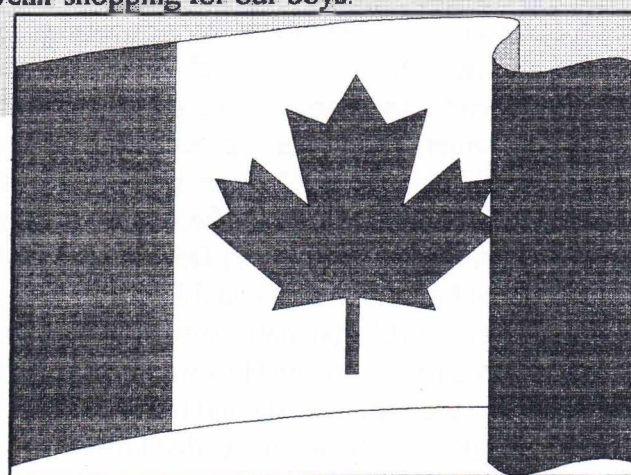
Then it was off to Riverdale. Our friends Jacob Pinolis and Sarah Markowitz used to live in Gainesville where Jacob was one of the few people I've known who could turn a doctorate in philosophy into something marketable. He taught philosophy at UF. But he'd received a very attractive offer to come to New York and teach at a private Jewish high school in Manhattan and took advantage of the opportunity. Sarah is an architect specializing in hospital design and renovation and spends a good part of her time on the road, traveling to places like the Mayo Clinic or overseas to upgrade hospitals and medical centers. They have two young children, Ayelet and Noah, so I knew it would be an interesting weekend, or at least the kind of weekend I hadn't spent in many years. If it wasn't summer we would just stay Friday night and then move into a hotel after the Sabbath, but since it's summer and the Sabbath doesn't end until 10 p.m. we imposed on them for an extra night. Two extra nights, actually, since we were leaving for Quebec early Monday morning.

Spending three nights in a cramped apartment with small children, sleeping on a futon, made me appreciate two things: The size of our house in Gainesville and the beds at the Benjamin Hotel. But we had a good time, and it was relaxing. Howard got to wear his new snazzy gray *tallit*, we had some wonderful vegetarian food (Jacob says he's a *de facto* vegetarian where Sarah is a *de jure* vegetarian) and considering how much red meat we'd been eating that week it was probably good to clean our pipes out. And their synagogue was friendly and had some wonderful tunes. It's a modern Orthodox synagogue laid out so the men's and women's sections are equal, separated by a low divider. I found it a very comfortable environment.

Sunday morning we met some friends from college at a nearby restaurant for breakfast and then did one of Howard's favorite vacation activities, attending a major league baseball game. Both Jacob and Sarah are Yankees fans and we'd invited them to join us, but Jacob opted for childcare and Sarah came along. It was the Yankees vs. The Tampa Bay Marlins, so it was a rout, of course, but we still had a good time. And it was hat day so we each got Adidas Yankees baseball caps, painlessly taking care of some souvenir shopping for our boys.

Sunday night they got a sitter and we drove back into Manhattan to eat at a kosher Persian restaurant on the upper West Side. The name of the restaurant escapes me but the food was memorable. We all sampled each other's dishes and even Sarah's vegetarian entree got rave reviews from the carnivores.

Then the next morning we were off for Quebec. We were flying out of Newark and made the airport in way less time than we anticipated, allowing us a few moments to roam around the facility. The Newark airport is a dump in the process of renovation. In its current condition it's nothing to brag about, especially compared to Tampa or Orlando or even O'Hare in terms of food choices, shops, etc. But they had direct flights to Quebec City where most airports required flying to Montreal and



then Quebec, so it was a good arrangement for us.

Our weather this entire trip had been nearly perfect and we started off the Quebec leg on the same footing, flying in over farm country under crisp, cool skies. It felt like Autumn in Gainesville, breezy with highs in the low 70's. As our travel agent promised, Quebec felt very foreign, which, of course it is to someone from the US, but moreso than say, Winnipeg. Everything was in French with the occasional nod to tourism by having English translations. Menus in particular offered this amenity. We got used to hotel staff answering the telephone first in French and then repeating themselves in English 'til they knew if they were talking with Anglo or Francophones.

We stayed in the Chateau Frontenac, the huge gabled and turreted building that our guidebook called "perhaps Canada's most photographed building". It's a Victorian era luxury hotel, with all the adornments and excesses one expects from that period. Pricey, but hey, it's our anniversary and who knew if we'd ever be back? We dropped off our luggage and went for a stroll, arranging first with our concierge for a carriage ride and some sightseeing and dinner reservations during our stay. The caleche (horse drawn carriage) is the best way to see the Vieux Quebec on a nice day and our guide, Gabriel and his good friend Mr. Bull, a placid Percheron, were happy to show us the sights.



Before the ride was lunch and for this we walked down the long, winding staircase, the Escalier Casse Cou (Breakneck Stairs) to the Basse Ville, the oldest quarter of Quebec City, filled with buildings from the 1600's and 1700's. It reminded me in many ways of Edinburgh--the many levels, the winding steep streets and the outrageously touristy yet charming shops and restaurants. And, like Edinburgh, I could almost understand the natives. Actually I found it very easy to get around when I was reading French. When people tried speaking French to me, that's when I missed having Raphi along.

We ate at the Pink Pig, recommended by our concierge and a good choice. Not fancy food, but good food, served all day along with an extensive beer and wine list. Howard tried the house beer and even though I'm not a beer fan I enjoyed some it as well. I suspect the rest of the world is right and US beer really isn't anything to write home about.

We walked back up the Casse Cou, although there was an alternative--the funicular cable car which goes from the lowest level at the riverside straight up to the Terrasse Dufferin, the boardwalk at the top of the cliffs. By the time we reached the top of the stairs Howard looked like the poster boy for Imminent Infarc and I assured him I wouldn't call him a wuss if he took the cable car next time. But I insisted on climbing the stairs myself, every single time and let me tell you, it's a workout if you do it three or four times a day.

We ate supper at the 47th Parallel, whose cuisine I can best describe as Nouvelle North American. Afterwards we window shopped, paying particular attention to the Tundra brand sweaters. These are similar in design to the "Coogi" style from Australia, but native to Canada.

We then strolled over to the Clarendon Hotel, pointed out to us on the carriage ride as home of live jazz nightly. It was a little gem of a bar with tables alongside tall windows that looked out over the nightlife on the streets, and a saxophone and keyboard duo while we were there. The Clarendon itself is an Art Deco era hotel and worth checking out if you're in Quebec City.

For our second day we kept our options open in the morning since we had a boat ride on the St. Lawrence reserved for the afternoon. Our breakfasts were included with the hotel and served in the Cafe de la Terrasse, which lived up to its guidebook reputation as a great spot for people watching, placed as it is on the Terrasse Dufferin. I'm not going to rave over every place we ate (though I could) but our best meal, bar none, was at Le Marie Clarisse at the bottom of Breakneck Stairs. Well worth the climb down and back.

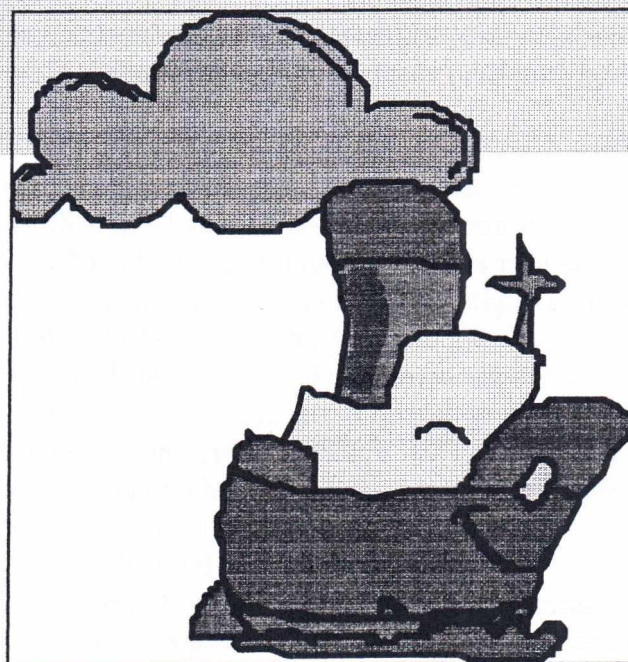
We did end up each buying sweaters and at better prices than their Australian cousins. I also bought some hats, a new summer one and a new winter model. One thing about towns with lots of churches--you can usually count on good millinery shops as well. I'll take the Fifth on whether or not Howard bought a Cuban cigar. Had I been in the market for a fur coat I would have had some incredible choices, but while I don't have any moral objection to wearing dead animals, I don't have much opportunity in Gainesville so I passed.

The boat ride on the St. Lawrence was a treat. We'd opted for the "historical" tour over the supper cruise and I'm sure it was the right choice. Our guide was a historical reenactor who switched back and forth between French and English with skill and verve. It was kind of strange though when our carriage driver and the historical reenactors talked about how the Citadel was built to keep the US from invading. Even though we did attack a few times we've managed to keep our hands off most of Canada after 1812.

Our next day looked rainy, the first bad day we'd had on this trip, but it made it all the better for our visit to Musee de la Civilization. Ten exhibit rooms of objects relating to Quebec life past and present, along with a special exhibit on diamonds and the diamond industry in Canada. We happened to arrive in time for an English speaking docent to begin a tour, which we'd been warned might not be the case--generally it's French only with handouts in English for the rest of us. So we tagged along at her invitation while she walked us through the diamond tour. And what a tour! In addition to all the material on diamonds from ancient times to Canada's growth industry of diamond mining there was an exhibit of jewelry from the Renaissance through modern times, all of it dripping with huge sparklers. I learned a quick method for weeding real from fake (if you touch a diamond to your lips it feels like ice, paste feels warmer) that I know I'm going to have to work into a book at some point.

They also had an exhibit in another wing from the French Maritime Museum that was worth the admission price alone for its aid in my research, and more rooms than we could visit unless we'd spent all day there.

We finally pulled ourselves away and



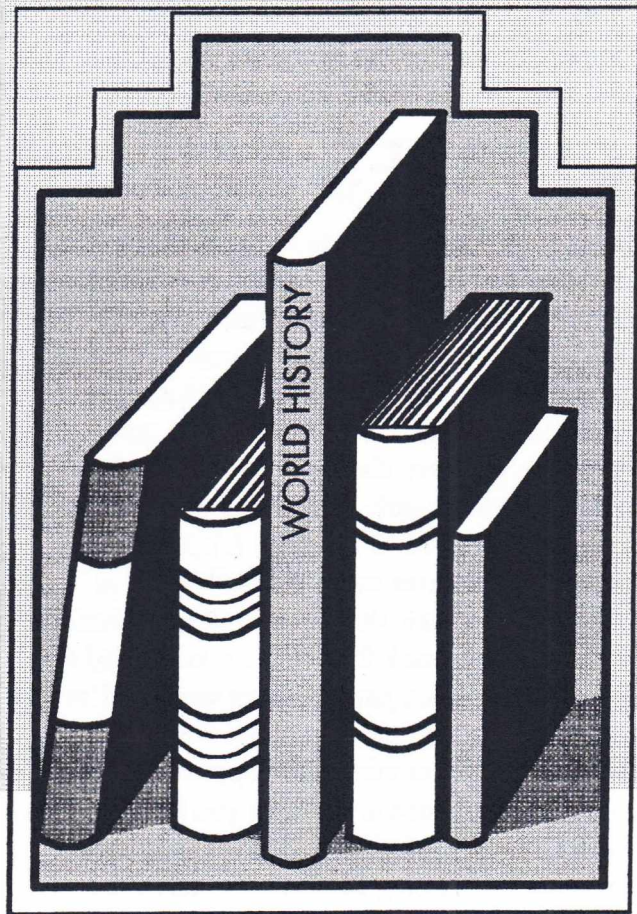
walked back to the Chateau, past a famous *trompe l'oeil* fresco in the Place Royale, the oldest market square in Quebec, stopped in to the Interpretation Centre to see a reconstructed typical Quebec dwelling from the 18th century, and had one more fine dining experience at Le Continental. As usual, we didn't get to do all we wanted to--we didn't tour the Citadelle, still used by the French speaking Royal 22nd Regiment as their headquarters, we didn't spend any time on the Plains of Abraham but passed it on our carriage tour, and we didn't take the guided tour of the Chateau Frontenac. But we did have a very good time and I'd love to go back and spend a few more days seeing everything, though we told our concierge it would be unlikely we'd return for the Winter Carnival. Lots of Canadiens did ask us why we'd come up there and my response was "we have so many Canadians come to Florida I wanted to see what they were getting away from."

Riding off into the sunset...

I'm finally finishing up my term as Alachua County Library Foundation chair, only a year past when my term should have expired. I was asked to serve another emergency one year term while we scrambled to get more people on the Foundation, and it worked. We're strong enough now to hold elections and have enough Foundation members left to step up to the plate if we need them.

In some ways we're victims of our own success. Back in the mid-80's I worked on passing a stealthy referendum which was worded so that it seemed (truthfully) to say "You're willing to vote for a strong healthy library system, right? This is a good thing?" where what we were really doing was setting up a separate taxing district for the public library. Also a good thing. Instead of the library budget being subject to the whims of general revenue budgeting--and if they have to choose between fire protection or libraries how do you think the County and County Commissioners would vote?-- we instead levy our own millage on top of the ad valorem property taxes. A small amount gets added on to each homeowner's tax bill, but it made all the difference. With our own budget we could plan for the future, build and expand and that's exactly what we've done. We've built four major branch libraries, renovated and added on to others, expanded hours to seven days a week at every branch and are putting another bookmobile on the road next year to serve a district with primarily public housing.

Despite all that, we still need money. The Foundation's mission is to provide long range

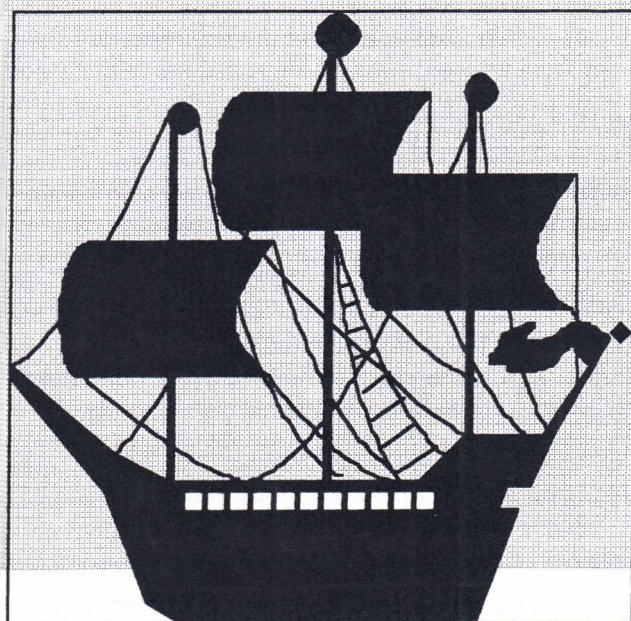


funding for the library through planned giving and large gifts. Part of our millage “sunsets” this year and has already been grabbed by another group which got a land trust act voted in. That too is a good thing and we didn’t think we could ask people to decide between saving wetlands and funding the library, so we gracefully didn’t oppose it. However, this means when we have our building renovations come up in a few years, especially re-roofing the main library and the major branches, we could experience a cash shortfall. At the very least, the Library trustees may have to make the kinds of decisions they hate to make--materials (books, tapes, etc.) vs. structures.

So I’ll continue to work with the Foundation. I’ve remembered them in my will and I hope those of you who are able to make bequests when you’re doing your estate planning and will writing will remember your public libraries. Think of what your library has meant to you, from youth through adulthood, and remember that it was there for you partly because someone before you, Andrew Carnegie being the most notable example, thought a free public library was an important part of the American democratic ideal.

PIRATES SAIL FROM NEW PORT!

Among the ashes of the dotcoms that crashed and burned we find Dreams Unlimited, a company that had good ideas and products but not as much business sense as was needed in these times. So there I was, looking at a book launch linked to a sinking ship, and I began to get very dismayed (to put it mildly) when another e-pub stepped in and made an offer for PIRATE’S PRICE. LTDBooks wanted my pirates and will re-release it in August from their site, www.ltdbooks.com in a variety of e-book formats. I was offered a contract for trade paperback as well but I’m holding off a bit until I see how we do in e-books. So if you missed the opportunity to order the first time around, or you had troubles with Dreams Unlimited and gave up, please consider purchasing PIRATE’S PRICE by Darlene Marshall from LTDBooks in either download or CD.

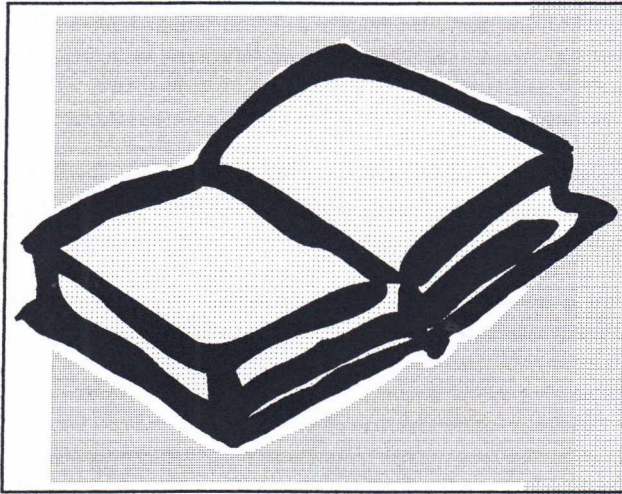


Oh, and we were all paid our royalties from DU before they folded so I can now say I’ve received my royalties and I’m actually making real money off my fiction. Thanks, all of you who purchased!

Book Reviews!

A PERSONAL DEVIL— Roberta Gellis--

Gellis is one of those multi-faceted authors that make the rest of us just sigh with envy. She writes romance, fantasy, and is making a name for herself in the mystery genre with her tales of Magdalene la Batarde, madam of the Old Priory Guesthouse in London. As a whoremistress Magdalene leads a precarious existence, so when one of her former employees gets involved with a murder, Magdalene goes to work to help solve the crime.



The problem is not "whodunnit" but who wouldn't have done it. Bertrild Mainard, the dead woman, was so nasty and loathsome that suspects who are glad she's dead just keep coming out of the woodwork. But with the help of Sir Bellamy of Itchen Magdalene keeps investigating until all is revealed.

Unfortunately, Magdalene's life is complicated by Sir Bellamy's feelings for her. He wants her, but doesn't understand why she won't stop whoring, and his resentment threatens Magdalene's independence and ability to do her job as whoremistress and investigate Bertrild's murder.

Gellis continues to deliver the goods and in the persons of Magdalene, Bell, the ladies of the Priory and other denizens of medieval London she's creating a mystery series that should delight for years.

KUSHIEL'S DART--Jacqueline Carey--

A debut fantasy

novel that may be one of the best fantasies I've read this year. But it's not for everyone. DART shows a world very similar to medieval Europe with countries like Alba, the Skalding lands and the center of the story, Terre d'Ange. The heroine, Phedre no Delauny, is the first *anguissette* born in the land in three generations and this makes her very valuable because an *anguissette* is a courtesan who loves pain. This is where Anne Rice might have taken the "Sleeping Beauty" series if she'd given Beauty half a brain--Phedre is very bright and receives training in arts, politics, language, spycraft and pleasure in the house of a nobleman who is much more than he seems.

It's a very well written novel that's not about D/S games so much as it's about personal honor and responsibility, with interesting religious overtones. And it's a romance too. Phedre is one of the most engaging heroines I've come across in a long time and the writing itself is lyrical. Carey is especially good at description and scene setting. It's not to everyone's taste, but worth checking out if you're looking for something different.

THE MYTH OF MATRIARCHAL PREHISTORY--

Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a

Future--Cynthia Eller--

Here's something I don't read everyday. A non-fiction book so entertaining I had a hard time putting it down. Eller's premise is that the whole Goddess worship thing, where there was a peaceful time before those nasty patriarchal God worshippers came along, just doesn't stand up to scrutiny. At the very least, the evidence touted by Goddess worshippers, from college campuses to bookstores can be interpreted in a variety of ways. How do we know that paintings of naked women on cave walls represent the Goddess? Could it instead be pre-historic porn?

Don't get me wrong, Eller isn't an anti-feminist. Far from it. Her reasonable premise is if you want to be taken seriously, you need serious empiric data and right now the Goddess worship movement is built on a shaky foundation. I highly recommend this book for a fascinating read.

An apology...

This was were I meant to put my mailing comments on the last two 'zines, but instead I've found myself spending way too much time at my computer, staring at the screen as blood drips off my forehead, trying to kill my villain. Yes, I'm almost done with CAPTAIN SINISTER. I know how it's going to end. I've got my players more or less in place. BUT IT'S DRIVING ME F&CKIN' CRAZY!

Every time I think I've got the denouement figured out, I keep finding logic holes that make me gnash my teeth and go back to that horrible sight, the blank page. But it's there. I know it's there. I know how it's going to happen. It's just a matter of getting it out of my brain in some kind of coherent fashion and getting it down on paper. I promise you, by the time the next disty deadline rolls around I'll have this sucker nailed down, in re-write and then the only pleasant decision I have to make is which brilliant idea I want to put on paper for novel #3.

Until then, I hope to see many of you at WorldCon,

Eve

