

News and Views *Avila*

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ALTON MENDLESON, AVILA'S NEW CEO, IS BACK HOME

By Murray Block



Photograph by Max Tiller

A true native of the Capital District, our new chief executive officer, Alton Mendleson, was born at Albany Med, and raised on Heather Lane in Delmar. After spending years following his career in Florida, he decided it was time to return to where his mother, his father, his younger brother and sister and their families live. The availability of the CEO position at Avila was a perfect opportunity for him to continue in the career path he had been following in Florida, and also be able to enjoy the closeness of family. He is divorced, without children, so being close to his siblings and their families was a definite plus in deciding to come north to work.

Alton is a product of the fine Bethlehem School District, having gone there through the eleventh grade at Bethlehem Central High School. He decided to transfer to the Albany Academy for his senior year. During that year, he was on their football team. The Academy's football team won the Governor's Cup that year---with Alton

making the final touchdown, breaking the tied game, and giving his team the winning score. Despite his short stay at the Academy, he became quite a celebrity there.

His undergraduate college days were spent at the University of Rochester, where he majored in optical engineering. This field is concerned with the design of optical instruments such as lenses, microscopes, telescopes, and other equipment utilizing the properties of light. He later decided not to pursue this field, and eventually moved to Florida, where he became a licensed nursing home administrator. After a number of years in nursing home administration, he moved on to assisted living administration, and then to independent living administration. These latter positions were in Port St. Lucie and Vero Beach.

What interests Alton, aside from his work? He is a sports enthusiast, and is proud to be a Yankees fan. He enjoys playing golf, and he loves hiking. He is also an avid reader.

He hopes that, in the near future, Avila can develop ideas and programs for the improvement of the quality of life for the residents. As he gets a chance to settle into the job a bit more, and meet more of the residents, this will be further pursued.

Alton is most impressed with the residents and staff at Avila. "This is a warm and special place," he said. "I find my job here most rewarding!"

The "warm and special" residents and staff at Avila welcome Alton Mendleson, and wish him much success and fulfillment as their new chief executive officer.

JUNE BARACH

By Karl H. Gohlke



Photograph by Karl Gohlke

June Barach and her late husband, Jack, had wished to move into Avila 15 years ago; however, there was a waiting list. They decided to rent a small house in the Whitehall Station section of Albany instead.

She and her husband were native Albanians who met when she was 17 and married while she was in college. Jack had started out in the photochemical business but succumbed to his father-in-law's offer to join him in the insurance business. He continued in that field until he retired.

June worked for five years in the accounts department at the state Education Department. Later, after her sons were out of the home, she worked part-time for 10 years at the *Times Union* providing tours for school groups and as an administrative assistant in a variety of bureaus.

She and Jack were active in the lives of their children and grandchildren, sharing their enjoyment in athletic events, particularly hockey. They raised three sons and a daughter. Their children have seven boys and a girl.

Boating, golf and tennis were favorite pastimes, second only to bridge for June. Many of the people with whom she enjoyed playing bridge were already in residence at Avila. Accordingly, the transition has not been difficult.

June has assimilated easily and is active in the Avila community.

SAM KAWOLA

Interviewed by Murray Block

Last year, a lonely, widowed Sam Kawola was invited to Avila, for the first time, by his friend, Doris Shuman. He, to quote his own words: "instantly fell in love with Avila and Pete (AKA Jeanette) Kunker" whom he met that first night. Within a few months, he joined his "beloved soul mate" at Avila, in Apartment 209.

Sam is a true son of the Capital District. He was raised in Watervliet, and is the recipient of a full local Catholic education, grade school through college, graduating *cum laude* from Siena College in 1961. He also spent three years in seminary education.

As Sam put it, he "eschews, as much as possible, material goods (aspiring to Seneca's stoic philosophy)" and embarked on a career in public service. He held a number of key positions in the NYS Division of the Budget, the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the NYS Division for Youth, and served as a budget analyst for the State University of New York's Central Administration. He also served as consultant in Human Services and Juvenile Justice in eleven states.



Photograph by Max Tiller

The letters of commendation he received from these agencies are a tribute to his success in these endeavors and to his humanitarianism to others. He also extends help to family and friends. He fondly helps care for his ailing sister, and provides love and support for his two sons and his granddaughter.

Sam loves to talk, read, bike, hike (he has hiked in 54 of the US National Parks), ski, bowl, work out, and for a change of pace—play poker. He particularly loves live theater and musicals at local venues.

Asking him for his thoughts on living at Avila, Sam was most positive, comparing it to being on a perpetual “Love Boat cruise—but without the waves!” And he added: “You can eat until you burst. You can work out until you drop. You can watch old movies until your eyes give out. You can drink wine until you pass out. You can listen to old quartets, old quintets, old guitarists, old banjo players until the cows come home. And if you are lucky, you can find many friends. And there are no leaks!”

Yes, our friendly and exuberant neighbor, Sam Kawola, has indeed found a happy home here at Avila!

EMMET AND PEG MCNAMARA

Interviewed by Wilbur Shapiro

Shuffle off from Buffalo come the brother and sister combo Emmet and Peg McNamara to Albany and Avila, to be closer to Emmet’s daughter, Kathleen, who lives in Troy.

Emmet is a graduate in liberal arts from Canisius College, Buffalo. He had a varied career as a SUNY/EOP counsellor, Allstate insurance agent, and a 37-month tour of duty in the Army where he surveyed the land from Florida to California. Emmet and his wife Patricia retired to their thatched-roof cottage in Ireland. After Patricia passed away, Emmet returned to Buffalo to be closer to family.

Peg studied Latin and Greek at D’Youville College in Buffalo and subsequently earned a BS degree in political science from Empire State College. She also had a varied career in administration and leadership. She started her career with the FBI, worked for the New York Assembly, and was the technology transfer officer for Navy Research Labs in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

The two McNamara’s are interesting and delightful personalities and are welcome additions to the Avila community.

FRANCES TARLTON AND MICHAEL BERGAN

By Karl H. Gohlke

Frances Tarlton and her partner, Mike Bergan, moved into Avila in late April. They had been residing for years in Albany. Both lived, earlier, in Bethlehem, but not as a couple.

Frances is a native of California and had moved to Albany with her family. She worked for years for the State Health Department, primarily as a public information officer for the commissioner. It was in that role that she was assaulted by a disturbed member of the public who disagreed with a public health program to combat AIDS.



Photograph by Karl Gohlke

Later, she was quite involved with the health insurance program for seniors. After her retirement, she joined the board of directors for Senior Services of Albany and remained involved in public health programs as a volunteer.

Mike was born in Albany and pursued a career in law. His firm specialized in employee relations and advocacy for professionals in the health and education fields. He followed his interests in mediation, dispute resolution, and other human services problem areas. While a resident in Bethlehem, he was active in scouting, youth sports and community government. He joined the board of directors for a number of human service organizations and served on those boards for extended periods. Moreover, he was active with the county and state bar associations.

Frances and Mike already know many of Avila's residents and have been integrating easily. They will bring many of their talents to the Avila community.

ANNE DELEHANTY

By Sally Tiller

*Happy birthday, Anne, a lady we adore
 We're glad you are our neighbor on East Wing, second floor
 Anne, you really look fine
 The same as you did at ninety-nine
 Now you have reached the big one oh oh
 So a little slower you must go
 We look forward to change of weather
 So that we can admire each and every sweater
 Your knitting skills cannot be beat
 What you have done is really neat
 Now we wish you much good cheer
 And all things good in the coming year*



Photograph by Max Tiller

EARNED REWARDS

By Al Staff

There are times when, in completing the details of your work, you accomplish a deed that has everlasting benefit to the parties to whom you convey your thoughts. As a public accountant, I serve not only the clients who own their own business enterprises, but also their employees.

Many times I would be approached by these individuals, who held me in high esteem because of my supposed superior knowledge of finances. They had personal problems with children or other relatives and close friends. Their trust was based on the fact that my reply would be unbiased.

There once was an extremely successful restaurant in Watervliet owned by an Italian immigrant. His daughter worked in the establishment as a cashier, earning \$35 a week. As the owner's daughter, she was paid much more than what others would be paid. One morning, when I arrived to do the books, the owner approached me with a problem. He told me that his daughter wanted to become a nun.

Knowing little about the Catholic faith, I asked if that was good or bad. No, he said in his broken English. I want her to have bambinos. I said, "Let me think about it." Before leaving that day, I told him to raise her salary to \$100 a week, and buy her an expensive car. He looked at me, perplexed. I assured him that she would be married in a year. He did what I suggested.

Sure enough, she met a fine man who was earning a good living as an insurance agent. They were married within six months. Unfortunately, he died at a young age.

Thereafter she sent me G-d Bless you greeting cards for the Jewish New Year, every year for 30 years. Never missed a year. One day I met her in the mall. I asked her why she was so diligent with the cards. Her reply was that had I not made the suggestion to her father, she would not have had her four bambinos.

TOM KRUEGER AWARDED

By Karl H. Gohlke



Photograph by Karl Gohlke

At a staff meeting held on July 30, Tom Krueger was presented with the "Employee of Distinction Award" by James Clyne, CEO of LeadingAge New York, an association of not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging. LeadingAge New York represents 600 agencies with 150,000 professionals serving 500,000 clients annually. The award is presented each year to 16 individuals in New York, two for each of the eight regions.

Congratulations to Tom for his excellent work for the residents at Avila.

Opportunity

By Wilbur Shapiro

*Ours is the land of opportunity
That statement needs further scrutiny
The sidewalks are not made of gold
That's a fable that's very old*

*So how does one take opportunity's invitation?
It's true for everyone in the nation
First you must not be an education fool
Try hard and do your best at school*

*Some immigrants come here for a better life chance
They work hard and some make the advance
It is quite amazing how they can get it done
With difficult language barriers to overcome*

*The one constant in achieving lofty ambition
Is hard work, persistence and dedication
Once in a while an opportunity is offered out of the blue
It happens rarely and to only a few*

*There are times when an opportunity may be lost
It's part of life, it's the cost
Do not despair or feel you have a lack
Success often goes to those who fight back*

*And so, opportunity is mostly a personal effort
It's not an entity that can bring you comfort
You must pursue opportunities with all your heart
And it helps a lot if you are smart*

A JEW IN SAUDI ARABIA

Murray Block

I never had to face this problem before. I had filled out dozens of visa applications to visit many, many countries — some quite distant and exotic. Never before was I asked to identify my religion on a visa form. Even in northwestern Pakistan, where the fundamentalist Taliban sympathizers were lying in wait, the visa was issued without question of religion. Of course, I would not have owned up to being a Jew in Peshawar or Mingora, cities that have since been the focus of Taliban destruction. When I saw the graffiti that greeted passengers exiting the Peshawar airport — “Death to the US”, “Death to Israel”, “Death to Bush” (it was Papa Bush then, not George W.) — I whispered to son, Paul: “If asked, we are Quakers from Canada!” One day, in Peshawar, a guard at a mosque stopped our guide and asked where we were from. Without prompting, he responded with “Canada”. Luckily, we were not asked to produce our Canadian passports. Incidentally, while in Peshawar, we stayed at the posh Pearl Intercontinental Hotel — blown up by the Taliban in June 2009.

I needed a visa for Saudi Arabia, because our trip to Egypt, the Sinai, and Jordan, with eight days on the Red Sea, was to dock at Doha on the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia, with a one-day excursion into the interior of that relatively isolated country. Saudi Arabia is not a mecca (oops!) for tourists from western countries. Asking questions like "what's your religion" is a deterrent. Requiring all women to wear long black robes over their clothing in this hot climate can be a turn off. Surprisingly, there was not too much grumbling among the women in our group. My friend, Ruthie, wrapped a cheerful scarf around the high collar of her black robe as her statement of opposition. And the fee of \$148 for the visa for the one day did not help international relations with the Saudis. One had to have a visa even if not getting off the ship to set foot on Saudi Arabian soil.

So how did I handle the question of religion on the visa? I felt that if I put down "Jewish", I might not get the visa approved. I read where that happened to a Jewish woman from California two years before my trip. She was the only one in her tour group denied a visa. However, lying would be chickening out. What I really wanted to put down was "NONE OF YOUR DAMN BUSINESS". I started to, but left it at just "NONE". I do not consider this chickening out. Ethnically, I am a Jew, and very proud to be so. However, I do not follow Jewish religious practices. They did not ask for my ethnicity, but my religion. I guess that "None" is a fairly honest and wise response. It gave me a brief glimpse of a culture and a country that might otherwise be forbidden to me.

Despite the fuss about the visas and the black robes for the women, getting into Saudi Arabia via the port at Doha was quite easy. They have built a huge new cruise terminal at this port. I read that many Egyptians, going to Saudi Arabia for the hajj, take the three-hour ferry ride across the width of the Red Sea to Doha, and then switch to overland transportation to Mecca. The new terminal is immense and unpopulated. No one seemed to be available to man the X-ray machines to check what we were bringing in. After some delay, the Saudi guide just motioned us to go around the barriers and we were all admitted, despite any contraband we may have had in our pockets. Who knows what weapons the women might have been hiding under the loose black robes provided for them on board our cruise ship?

We boarded a bus and headed inland to Tabuk, a fair sized city about 100 km from the port. The mountains along the way are beautifully rugged and colorful. The city of Tabuk is clean looking, rather modest in size, and a bit on the sleepy side. Not too many people seemed to be milling about in the midday heat. The men were dressed in various fashions — some in white caftans with the traditional *keffiyeh* headdresses, others in pants and shirts, western style. The few women on the streets all wore black robes, with faces covered and only slits available for the eyes. For some reason I did not understand, the women in our tour group did not have to cover their heads — thank God (or Allah)!

We were taken to a place where they grew ornamental flowers for shipment all over the world. The cool interior of the shipping facility was a welcome respite from the hot, dry air outside. Various kinds of long stemmed beautiful flowers were carefully being packed into white boxes and readied for shipment. Most of the employees were men in western garb. There were several women working — not too close to the men. They were all covered in their black top-to-toe robes and scarves. I asked if I might take a picture of two of them, and their gracious, smiling eyes, seen through the slits in their headscarves, gave signs of approval.

We visited an old fort in the center of town, where the women in our tour party posed for the mandatory group picture with all of them wearing their black robes, looking like a convention of female Supreme Court Justice nominees. In town, we visited several local shops, many selling firearms and related equipment. I confined my shopping to obtaining *galibeyas*, the traditional Arab men's caftans, for my sons, grandsons, and great grandson.



unfortunately.

One of the Bedouin men performed an intricate sword dance and then invited members of our group to join him. I could not skip this photo op. I handed my camera to my friend, Bob, and joined the soloist. He offered me a sword and we started a mock battle-dance. It ended with the Arab and the Jew holding hands while brandishing our swords in friendly fashion. Of course, he had no idea I was a Jew. I fudged on my visa application!

My best souvenir of this pleasant day was a purchase I made in the small "shop" at the Bedouin camp. I saw it hanging on the wall and knew I had to have it — whatever it was. It is a contraption made with red yarn tassels hanging from a leather strip, with metal rings at each end of that strip. I was told it is an Arabian horse collar. I had not seen one like it before, so I entered into the required Middle Eastern ritual of bargaining. Both Jews and Arabs have it in their blood. He asked \$60; I offered \$20; after several fake attempts by me to walk out, and by him to have to check with the "owner," we settled for \$40... We both got what we wanted: he, a good price, and me, something no one else I know has. The Arab and I had a friendly negotiating session. I danced and crossed swords in sociable manner with another Arab.

Why can't our counterparts in the Middle East follow our example?

A ROAD SCHOLAR EXPERIENCE

By Marion Burns

On a Saturday in mid-June, I drove to Cape Cod for a Road Scholar program entitled, "Cape Cod: Oceanography and Natural History." It was to be held in the small town of Woods Hole (pop. 718), near Falmouth, at the Marine Biology Lab, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and the Woods Hole Research Aquarium. As is my usual practice when attending such a program, I left a day early to explore the area and relax. Upon entering the Cape, I stopped at one of my favorite places, The Sandwich Glass Museum. I never tire of watching the glassmaking process and enjoyed their many rooms of glass displays, many pieces, priceless.

I spent my free exploration time with a slow drive along the Cape Cod National Seashore, making stops at overlooks, lighthouses, dunes, and the two National Park Service visitor's centers which had excellent displays and films on the history, geology, wildlife and plant life of the Cape.

The first full day of our program launched me on an amazing journey of ocean science. I never expected to learn so much about biomedical research in a course about the sea. One scientist, who has been at the Marine Biology Lab for 40 years, explained that his primary area of study evolved over the years to sea slugs and their impact on dementia diseases research. The opalescent sea slug develops precursor proteins similar to those in human Alzheimer's and stroke.

Other amazing lectures included descriptions of how the eye glands of some sharks teach scientists about preventing human cataracts; the rectal glands of other sharks produce a mucous used to study human cystic fibrosis; horseshoe crabs are used in cancer research; and toadfish produce insulin used in diabetes research. And did you know that ocean fish and live fish embryos have been sent on outer space missions?

There were also lectures on climate change, recent shark attacks and local environmental science.



Photograph by Marion Burns

The highlight for me was going several miles out to sea on a research boat. Cameras and video recorders were lowered miles below sea level as we watched monitors on the boat for the live-action. These images are transmitted to lab scientists who watch and record data. We dredged sea creatures which are also forwarded to the lab where we later watched sea plankton and pollen put through an MRI and enlarged to 200 nanometers.

We toured the Marine Biology Lab's archives library and actually held an original signed copy of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. Another notable

moment was when a tightly sealed glass case was unlocked so we could each hold a Nobel Peace Prize medal, one of over 60 which have been awarded to scientists in this lab.

As the program ended, I reflected on the astonishing accomplishments that come from this tiny, seldom-heard-of science mecca and how profoundly it benefits our entire global community.

A TRAVEL VIGNETTE: JERUSALEM

By Fred Seltzer

In 1984 I was in Jerusalem, Israel. Entering through the Lions' Gate, I walked the ancient streets, following the Stations of the Cross (the Via Dolorosa) to the Khan El Zeit market. Adjoining the market was a flight of stairs which led to an Ethiopian monastery on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. A priest, learning that I had been to Ethiopia, then led me down another flight of stairs into the Ethiopian Church. He showed me some of their holy books, written in Ge'ez, a Semitic language used in the Ethiopian Church, with illuminations of St. George and other religious scenes. After being alone in the Ethiopian Church, I exited to find myself surrounded by hundreds of visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



Photograph by Fred Seltzer

CELLPHONES AND WIRELESS NETWORKS

John Wagner

Cellphones have grown from the original mobile telephone to today's smartphone. The services offered grew from simple voice communication to the wide variety of services available today. This range of services is provided by the wireless networks that utilize the Bell Telephone network with which we grew up. It is primarily used to connect different cell towers.



The original mobile telephone was introduced in 1981. This phone used a radio link to connect the phone to the Bell Telephone network. The signal was received by radio equipment mounted atop tall poles now called "towers." This radio gear was connected to the Bell Telephone network at a nearby central office. To space these towers effectively, the regions were subdivided into hexagonal areas call "cells"; hence the mobile telephones came to be called "cellphones." The first cellphones required bulky transmitters and receivers, taking up the space of a large suitcase. These were often placed in the storage compartments of a car. The first cellphones transmitted only analog voice signals equivalent to those used earlier

in the Bell Telephone network.

The cellphone was the last of the many innovative contributions by the Bell Telephone companies. The year 1982 saw the break-up of AT&T (American Telegraph and Telephone Corporation). The Corporation settled a long standing anti-trust litigation by accepting a mandated decree to divest itself of three of its four components: the Bell Telephone Laboratories, the Western Electric Manufacturing Division, and the Regional Bell Telephone Operating Companies. AT&T retained control of its Long Lines Division which provided the long distance service.

One result of this break-up was the elimination of the requirement that the Bell Operating Companies use only equipment manufactured by Western Electric. Thus, other companies could now make and sell telephone equipment, particularly the new mobile telephone.

Much of the early development of cellphones was done overseas by organizations like NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone) in Japan and Samsung in South Korea. These firms focused on the cellphone itself, reducing it to a hand-held device with a battery powered computer. Other companies, such as Verizon, worked to improve the radio link and to acquire Bell Operating companies to support their wireless networks and the new services they would offer.

The most obvious changes were made to the cellphone itself. Operating systems like Android and Apple's IOS were created for mobile computers. Touch screen technology was adopted as the input method. The new cellphones also included the functions found in PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), such as calendars, calculators, and lists of telephone numbers.

Verizon changed the radio link to a digital one and sought to improve its performance. During this period, Verizon and other firms began to build their wireless networks and their new non-telephone services, such as directories of local restaurants, theaters, etc.



The various firms involved in these developments set up a committee to coordinate their efforts. To mark progress, the term "generation" was introduced to characterize a significant new set of expected performances. This committee also established regulatory standards that would define each generation.

In 1992, the next generation (2G) of networks appeared in this country. They used a wireless version of the digital technology previously installed in the Bell Telephone network. Wireless network companies supplied other services to their customers, such as digital voice service, encrypted communication, limited texting, voice mail and a choice of ring tones. Japanese phone manufacturers introduced a camera into the phone by adding an image sensor in the phone's electronics and mounting a lens in its case. In 1992, IBM announced the first "smartphone", a device that was a phone, a pager, a PDA, and a fax machine, all rolled into one.

The 3G networks were introduced in 2001. Higher data transfer rates made possible mobile web browsing, sharing of images, and GPS location and tracking. The new features also included mobile broadband and seamless global roaming. The advent of computer games and e-books made the cellphone an entertainment site.

The current 4G networks, also known as LTE (Long Term Evolution), were introduced in 2009. They offered high speed internet access and other technical advances that improve the speed, clarity, reliability, and coverage of the wireless network. Some networks offered HD media streaming. An app on the iPhone made it possible to use the phone as a credit card. The iPhone also had the ability to recognize fingerprints.



A goal of 5G networks is to support higher traffic levels and to improved connectivity to meet the needs of a large growing customer base. For example, smart cell sites will be installed in high traffic areas. The improved data transfer speeds and greater bandwidth will allow many more devices to use the wireless networks. In 2018, there were more than 8 billion "Things" connected to the Internet and the IOT (Internet of Things) is growing at more than 30% per year. Networks like Verizon will try to facilitate such growth. There are also plans to employ 5G networks in sub-Saharan Africa which lacks landlines and will need

high connectivity to serve a potentially enormous customer base.

We can expect other developments in the field of wireless networks. LoRa is a network that uses low power, broad bandwidth and long range coverage to help Australian cattlemen monitor their herds. A solar powered ear tag enables a rancher to locate his animals and check on their well-being. Released in 2015, this is probably the first IOT where the Things are in random motion. A similar network can be used to control the admission and movement of people at large outdoor music festivals.

Further technical innovation is needed to cope with a coming problem. There are just so many frequencies in the radio bands in the electromagnetic spectrum. Currently, when interference is detected on a given frequency, that signal is automatically shifted to a different, unoccupied frequency. As the traffic levels rise, there will be fewer unoccupied frequencies and this shifting technique will be less effective. We need to find ways to maximize the usage of our limited spectrum of frequencies.

WHAT IS LIFE?

By Maxine Koblenz

- Life is a challenge meet it
- Life is a gift accept it
- Life is an adventure dare it.
- Life is a sorrow overcome it.
- Life is a tragedy face it.
- Life is a duty perform it.
- Life is a game play it.
- Life is a mystery unfold it.
- Life is a song sing it.
- Life is an opportunity take it.
- Life is a journey complete it.
- Life is a promise fulfill it.
- Life is beauty praise it.
- Life is a struggle fight it.
- Life is a goal achieve it.
- Life is a puzzle solve it.

COUNCIL ELECTION ADVANCING

Karl H. Gohlke

This year the Resident Council will be holding an election to elect no more than eleven residents to form a council. Those members will elect the three officers: President, Vice president, and Recording Secretary. They will become the Resident Council for 2020.

Council members are residents who have an interest in participation in the various committees that work with management and department heads to maintain the excellent life-style enjoyed by the residents. They assist in the planning, programming and budgeting for the operation of the plant and services provided at Avila. Participation in these activities is interesting and provides the organization with your knowledge and insights for any improvements that may be warranted for future operation.

There will be an announcement shortly advising what residents who are interested in serving need to do become a member of the Council.

VOLUNTEER

