

Avila News and Views

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

April 2020

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK:

The past weeks have been like a long, dreary, lonely winter. Imagine those who live alone and have little contact with the outside community. Think about how lucky we are – we have people around us and we don't have to worry about getting the essentials of everyday life.

How are you coping?

Are you getting out to enjoy the fresh air? Yes, spring is here, and the trees will soon start showing their green buds. Sitting on a sunny porch or patio for just a few minutes can give you a sense of freedom and well-being.

Are you exercising? Some of us are getting to know our parking lots and inner roads well, just by taking a daily walk. If necessary, use your rollator and sit down whenever you get too tired. After you have rested, you can get up again and walk a little further.

If you are physically able, are you learning to clean your home again? Some of us are taking this opportunity to do it, slowly. What about those cabinets you always meant to clear out?

Then there's always television, games on the computer, or (remember?) the radio and newspapers. Have you read a good book recently? Pass it on to others. If you have a tablet or smartphone, and a library card, download books from your library.

Have you tried using Skype or FaceTime to keep in touch with your family? It brings a sense of having them closer to you.

Of course, aside from family, the most important people in our lives are our friends and neighbors. We need to get around and see each other (from a six-foot distance), to see how each one is doing, perhaps just to say hello to someone you haven't seen for a while.

Hopefully, soon all of this will be behind us and we will get back to normal. In the meantime, perhaps the stories your neighbors have contributed to this issue will help to make the time go by more quickly.



ARLENE GILBERT

Interviewed by Murray Block



Photograph by Max Tiller

Arlene Gilbert, our vibrant new neighbor in Apartment 320 West, is well rooted in the Albany area. Her family moved to the Capital District when Arlene was 14 and she has spent most of the best years of her life here. Skipping her senior year at Van Rensselaer High School, she entered Albany State Teachers College as a 16-year-old freshman, class of 1954. There was no tuition to pay, she commuted from home, and won a NYS Scholarship that covered all necessary expenses.

Caught up in the *zeitgeist* of the 50's, she was married at 18, and left college at the end of her junior year to become a mother and homemaker. After eight years, five children, and somewhat wiser, she realized she needed to complete her education, so she could teach and help support their large family. When the opportunity arose to attend evening classes at Russell Sage College, she was able to take one course a semester until she completed her BA in 1964. In order to accomplish this, she relied on the cooperation of her husband and friends, doing her studying and paper writing at night while the

family slept, and ever mindful of the needs of her children. Again, she was the fortunate recipient of scholarships from Russell Sage that made this affordable.

In the fall, she qualified for an assistantship in the History Department at SUNY Albany. This meant free tuition and a small stipend to pursue her master's degree, which she completed over the next three years at the same slow pace that allowed her to care for her home and family.

Nevertheless, by 1968, the marriage failed, the children were all in school, and Arlene went to work for SUNY Albany as an Assistant to the Dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs. So began the challenges of raising four sons and a daughter, as a single mother. This was always "Job One" to Arlene, but she needed the additional education for the career to support them. She was fortunate to also have the support of fellowship and guidance from the First Unitarian Society of Albany (FUSA), and from the Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS). Both groups continue to enrich her life.

After two years working at the Graduate School of Public Affairs, she moved on to Institutional Research and later to the Institute for Public Policy Alternatives. both as part of SUNY's Central Administration. Next came four years as Administrative Director at Welfare Research, Inc., a policy research firm. The last project she directed was for the NYS Department of Health where she was able to demonstrate that many people on public assistance could accomplish financial independence as healthcare workers. These people moved off the welfare rolls of Onondaga county in 1993. That was the year Arlene retired.

These busy years passed, and the five children grew up and moved into their own successful lives.

Arlene's oldest son, Michael, is retired from the State Department of Audit and Control. He lives in rural Washington County. Peter lives in Colonie, having retired from the State Department of Taxation and Finance. Tom is an engineer for Oracle. He lives in Boulder, Colorado. Edward works for the Higher Education Assistance Corporation in Albany. Susan is a homemaker and mother, living with her family in Richmond, Virginia. In all, these children have made Arlene the proud grandmother of nine.

Arlene has many interests. She is an avid lover of ballet and music and is also an accomplished artist. Some of her beautiful paintings adorn her apartment. She has been a longtime member of the Albany Unitarian Universalist Society. And she has been active in the Capital District Humanist Society.

Arlene moved to Avila after living for the past 32 years in a beautiful spacious house on a lovely section of Manning Boulevard. It was not an easy move to make. However, the decision as to where to move, and the physical move itself, were facilitated by her loving family. She visited quite a few senior residences. Avila seemed the best to her. She loves her spacious apartment. She appreciates the friendly, warm atmosphere at Avila. And the bridge sessions!

She is delighted to be here at Avila---just as we are delighted to have her as our new neighbor. Welcome, Arlene!

LARRY AND JUNE JOHNSTON

By Rod Correll

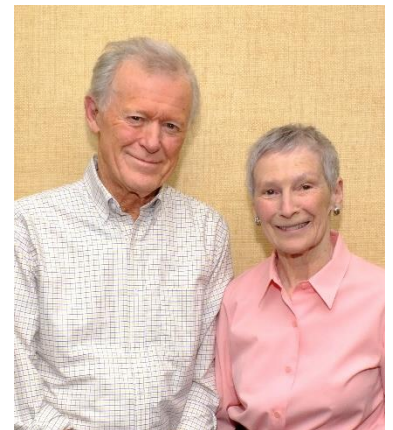
Larry and June Johnston arrived at cottage 27 in Avila last November after moving from their home in nearby Voorheesville. They are delighted to be here.

They were both born in New York City, but in different boroughs (and years), Larry in Queens and June in Manhattan. Soon thereafter, their parents moved, Larry's to Mamaroneck, NY, and June's to Portland, Me. Following education in local schools, they received college degrees, Larry from Trinity in Hartford, CT and June from Smith in Northampton, MA.

Their story is somewhat unusual as they have moved 13 times while managing numerous career changes. Fate placed them together in 1960 at a July 4th dance in the Catskill mountains. They were married a year later and moved to NYC where their two children were born: Mark in 1962 (now in McLean, VA) and Marly in 1964 (now in Wilton, CT). Their family includes five grandchildren, ages eighteen to twenty-nine.

Larry ended his initial career in insurance when he decided to move into a growing leisure marketplace. He joined Liberty Travel as a trainee for \$75 a week selling package tours to such places as Miami and Puerto Rico. This turned out to be a good decision as he went on to become an executive in a large company that handled the business travel of major corporations. While this work was rewarding and provided interesting travel opportunities, his interaction with customers lessened over time and he missed this personal contact. At age 55, he resigned from American Express to open a restaurant in NYC. Over the next 20 years, he designed, built and opened four neighborhood/pub-type establishments. His favorite, the second place in NYC, named "Fred's" after a female Labrador retriever, remains in business today and is an upper west side landmark.

The family moved from NYC to Rye, NY in 1969. When the children were both in grade school, June took a position with a local film and video laboratory and developed expertise in motion picture film duplication. For the next 14 years, she advised professional film makers on projects in the motion picture industry. At age 44, when their children were in college, June decided to go to law school.



Photograph by Max Tiller

After graduating from Pace Law School, she worked for the New York City Law Department. At that time, the city required a New York residency so the Johnstons moved from Rye back to NYC. Initially, June worked as a trial attorney and then held various supervisory positions, including Chief of the Special Litigation Unit which handled the high-profile, high-exposure tort cases. June enjoyed every aspect of this 16-year litigation career. In 2005, after moving to Stamford, NY, a small village in the rural Catskills, June purchased a sole-proprietor law firm and happily ran a general practice for the next ten years.

The story about the Johnstons' residences is an exceptional one. The list of home renovations, in sequence, includes a horse stable/cottage in Rye, two ancient co-op apartments in NYC, a 15 bedroom boarding house and a 10,000 sq. ft. dairy barn converted to a home (both in Stamford, NY) and finally, a 200 year-old neglected stone house in Voorheesville. Working on the horse stable was a game changer because they developed the confidence necessary to handle future residential challenges. Wooden plaques with the names of the horses that lived in the stable decorate a wall of their cottage at Avila.

Over the years, they have worked on various volunteer projects. Larry worked over 10 years with Habitat for Humanity in all five boroughs of NYC as well as Newark, NJ and Albany. June's most recent volunteer work was in a pro bono capacity for nonprofit or indigent clients in Stamford, NY.

The Johnstons want to thank the Avila residents for their warm welcome. They look forward to building on these friendships and contributing to the welfare of Avila.

JOHN YANAS

Interviewed by Erin Teichman



Photograph by Max Tiller

Avila welcomes its newest resident, John Yanas, to the Grand Lodge west side. John, born and raised in Albany, is a former attorney who practiced general law for 60 plus years during which he served as an Albany City Court Judge from 1969-1974.

John and his wife, Mary Faith, were married over 40 years. She died in 1992. They raised two sons, John and Joseph, and two daughters, Kathy and Mary Patricia. He is the proud grandfather of four and great grandfather of three. His son John is pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Troy. With the family, he and Mary Faith enjoyed golf and the other activities available to members of the Albany Country Club. He has been a member for over 50 years. Also, they owned a condo in Florida for 22 plus years. The family would spend time during the winter in the warmth. John would need to return to Albany as a working attorney, while Mary Faith and the children were able to stay longer.

He and his Avila neighbor, Betsy McCarthy, have known each other for several years; their sons went to Christian Brothers Academy together. John's children persuaded him to move to Avila as they felt his living alone was not good, especially as they had convinced him to give up driving. He said he has been here three months and enjoyed living here. We look forward to getting to know John better.

THE MISSING PUZZLE PIECE

By Pat Connally

Everyone has a story and mine goes back about 20 years when I regularly did 1,000-piece puzzles on my dining room table. Well, about then my children were getting married and had extra room in their homes. After completing each puzzle, I thought it was not easy to disassemble it. I began gluing them, putting a frame around them, and giving them to my kids, whether they wanted them or not. Now when it was time to give my last puzzle, didn't I have only 999 pieces. Lo and behold, I was not going to give it away unfinished, so I covered it with a sheet and put it under a bed.

Now about two years later it was necessary to defrost the large refrigerator/freezer we had in the basement. It was quite a chore taking out all the food. Lifting out each large item I felt something hit my head in my temple area. It was not large, so I picked it up to investigate. Shock and surprise overwhelmed me as I discovered the missing puzzle piece. It was ready to place in the puzzle, soon given to my son Kevin, ready to adorn a wall in his house. They loved it, I think, or at least that's what they said.

THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR

By Murray Block

All the islands in the Galapagos archipelago are beautiful scenically — filled with lush vegetation and stocked with unusual and vibrant animal life forms. The island of Floreana, however, has an historic distinction that makes it most fascinating to visit. Situated in the south-central segment of the chain of islands, Floreana is on the direct route of ships crossing the Pacific Ocean. In the days of sailing ships, journeys from Europe to the Orient and back home took a year or longer to complete. Those coming through the Straits of Magellan would sail up the west coast of South America and stop in the Galapagos to load up with fresh water and provisions, especially tortoises which could be stored live on board until needed for food.



A crude form of postal service became popular on the island of Floreana. At a safe cove, called Post Office Bay, English sailors set up a barrel into which mail would be deposited by ships heading toward the Orient. Ships on the return trip would stop at Post Office Bay to pick up mail deposited there and bring them to Europe for further posting to their destinations. Floreana received further notoriety in the 1930's because of the mysterious events surrounding a handful of adventurers who decided to settle on this uninhabited island. In preparation for my trip to the islands in 1991, I read a most fascinating book about this group, *The Galapagos Affair* by John Treherne.

Dr. Friedrich Ritter was a 43-year-old doctor who was dissatisfied with his life in post-World War I Germany. He was intrigued with the writings of Nietzsche who rejected bourgeois civilization and believed the Christian standards of life to be decadent. Nietzsche wrote of the "superman" who lived beyond conventional standards, thus setting him off from what he considered the "herd of inferior humanity."

Ritter decided to look for a place where he could live this philosophical idyllic life as a superman away from the common masses. One of his patients, Dore Strauch, fell in love with Ritter and his concepts. They decided to emigrate to the Galapagos Islands. One problem stood in their way. Both were married and they were hesitant to hurt their spouses. They came up with a practical solution. They introduced their spouses to each other. In September of 1929, the swap was made, and Friedrich and Dore arrived on Floreana Island, loaded down with cartons of books, dishes, seeds for their garden, and a burro. Friedrich had all his teeth pulled out before leaving Germany. He had a scientific desire to find out if gums could be so toughened as to substitute for teeth. However, he got himself a set of stainless-steel dentures for special occasions. Thus began their isolated idyllic life.

Their trip received much publicity in Germany, because of the spousal swapping scandal. Curious strangers showed up on the island, thus breaching their privacy. One visitor to Floreana claimed that Dore had also become toothless, and they had to share their one set of dentures. Other nature worshippers tried to follow suit, but most did not stay. However, all the visitors brought back stories of the paradise Friedrich and Dore had carved out for themselves.

In August 1932, the Wittmers arrived — Heinz, his young pregnant wife Margret, and Harry, his 12-year old son from a former marriage. They had read romantic stories about the couple on Floreana, and due to the terrible depression in Germany, they decided to emigrate there. Heinz had specifically selected this location because Ritter was a doctor and Margret was pregnant. Despite being the only ones on the island, there was no love lost between them. The Wittmers were down-to-earth and practical. Margret set up a house of Teutonic orderliness on Floreana. Ritter and his paramour had their heads in their philosophical clouds and resented the intruders. However, they did try to tolerate one another.

Later in 1932, their relative peace was disrupted by the arrival of the "Baroness." She entered the scene riding on a donkey, with her entourage of four men walking behind her. She announced that she had bought the island and proclaimed herself "Empress of Floreana." She said she was drawn to the place by the stories she had read of the "Adam and Eve of Floreana." Her plans were to set up a luxury hotel to attract American millionaire guests. The stories about the Baroness were quite lurid and were featured in the tabloids of the early 1930's. She was referred to as sex-mad with a procession of lovers, despite her living on this isolated island. She pitted lover against lover. It was rumored that one lover had chained up another and beat him while the Baroness laughed. She was said to walk around in silk panties with her revolver tucked inside.



Obviously, the original settlers did not take well to their new empress. They complained to the governor of the Galapagos, but he ended up granting her four square miles of land, while the other two families got 50 acres each, and he invited her to come visit him. Stories about the Baroness appeared frequently in magazines, and that brought even more unwelcome traffic to the island, some thinking they were coming to a nudist paradise. The Baroness was insufferable to her neighbors. She would intercept and read their mail that was deposited at Post Office Bay. She stole food and supplies that were dropped off for them. They were not happy settlers.

In November of 1934, the Baroness and her dominant lover disappeared, Dr. Friedrich Ritter died, and the pathetic beaten lover showed up dead on the shores of a distant island. These mysteries have never been fully resolved. The Wittmers claimed that the Baroness and her lover had sailed off to Tahiti. They never reached there, nor were heard from again. Later, it was rumored that the beaten lover had killed them and then sailed off, only to be shipwrecked on another island. If so, where are their bodies? Also, he was consumptive and too sickly to kill them and dispose of the bodies without an accomplice.

Shortly before his sudden death, Ritter had sent a statement to a newspaper in Ecuador claiming that Heinz Wittmer had killed the Baroness. Ritter's death was equally mysterious. Dore said he had a stroke. Margret Wittmer said he died after eating poisoned chicken that Dore had prepared for him. He was a vegetarian, and the chickens were raised on Margret's property. Soon after, Dore returned to Germany, and the Wittmers were left alone on their island paradise — Heinz, Margret, the older son Harry, and the younger son, Rolf, born on Floreana. In 1937, a daughter, Ingeborg, was born.

Over the years, the family dwindled down. Harry drowned in 1951. Heinz died in 1963. In the 1960's, two more people, one a female American tourist, vanished on Floreana, and Ingeborg's husband and Rolf disappeared. Margret was summoned to inquiries in all these disappearances but was acquitted. She and Ingeborg were the sole survivors when we visited in 1991, and our guide, Greg, said we could visit the legend.

Having just read the book, *The Galapagos Affair*, I was very excited about meeting the surviving protagonist of this weird saga. Greg warned me not to ask questions about the Baroness. Margret had written her side of the story in her autobiography and has refused to talk about it again. In 1991, the 86-year-old was serving as Postmistress of Floreana and ran a little shop that sold snacks and sodas to tourists who happened to come by. There were about 50 Ecuadorians living on this island, so her postal duties were not too heavy. She sold stamped post cards, marked "Barrel Post" that could later be dropped off at Post Office Bay.

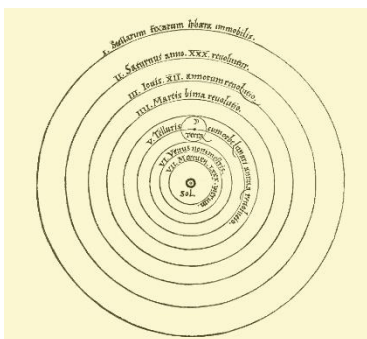
Margret Wittmer was gracious to us and spoke in fairly good English. This gray-haired woman looked solid and hardy, just as I would expect of the pioneer who created a new life for herself and her family in this isolated place. Her charm and gentleness did not fit the image I had of her when I read that a visitor to her cottage in the late 1930's had observed a rather large portrait of Adolf Hitler on prominent display. Her grandmotherly mien belied the rumors that she may have done in the Baroness and poisoned the doctor with her chicken. We talked only of current life on the island, skirting around any questions about the past. There were chickens running around her yard, so she was obviously still raising and serving them.

I bought stamps and mailed post cards home, and she offered us drinks and snacks. I took a bottle of coke, but cautiously declined anything that looked like chicken!

MODELS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

By John Wagner

Last year was the 500th anniversary of the publication of Nicolaus Copernicus' model of the solar system. It was a heliocentric model, with the Earth and all the other planets orbiting the Sun. It led to scientific and religious controversy.



This heliocentric model wasn't the first such model. An earlier one was proposed by a Greek astronomer named Aristarchus of Samos. About the third century BC, he proposed a similar model with the Earth circling the Sun. His colleagues thought it made no sense: their eyes said that the Sun was moving, and their feet told them that the Earth was not. Furthermore, the prevailing view at the time was expressed in the cosmology of Aristotle (384-322 BC). It presented a geocentric model: The Earth was fixed at the center of the world and the Sun, Moon, and other planets rotated around it. They were set on "celestial spheres" which were unchangeable.

This view was presented in detail by a Greek mathematician and astronomer, Ptolemy of Alexandria (100 - 170 AD). Ptolemy created the "Almagest," a book that had the most complete catalog of stars and ancient constellations. The Almagest also contained tables enabling astronomers to compute past and future positions of the Sun, Moon, planets and stars. The Almagest was translated into several languages and the Arabic version is the source of the names of many of our stars.

But his most lasting contribution was a physical model of the solar system with the Earth at its center. This geocentric model consisted of a set of concentric spheres, one for each planet. The smallest sphere was for the Moon, followed by those for Mercury, Venus, and the Sun. Then came the spheres for Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The eighth sphere was a shell containing all the stars. The orbit of each planet contained an "epicycle," a small circular orbit that represented the planet's retrograde motion (the apparent backward movement of a planet when the Earth passed by it).

The tables and this Ptolemaic model were very successful and remained in use by astronomers for over 1400 years. They also served to familiarize many generations of astronomers with Aristotle's cosmology and physics.

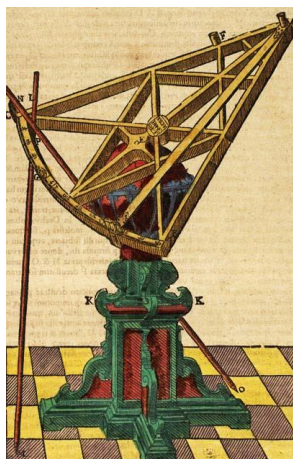
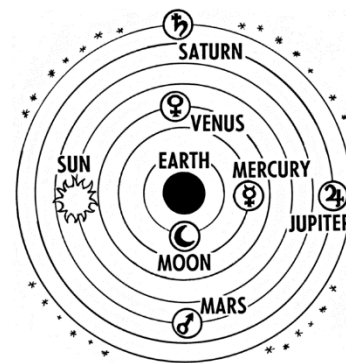
In the centuries that followed, there were only sporadic suggestions of other solar system models. Martianus Cappella, an Algerian writer of the fourth century, described a model of the solar system in which Mercury and Venus are placed on epicycles around the Sun, which circled the Earth. He also suggested an extension which would put the other three planets circling the Sun.

In the fifteenth century, an Indian astronomer, Nilakantha Somayaji, proposed a model in which all five planets orbited the Sun which, in turn, orbited the Earth. He was the first to present a geo-heliocentric model.

The next suggestion came from Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543). He was a Polish mathematician and astronomer who created a heliocentric model. In this model, planetary orbits were all circles with the Sun at their center. Each of the planets moved at a constant speed. A paper presenting this model was printed in 1519. It is not clear if Copernicus had any knowledge of Aristarchus' work.

Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) was a Danish astronomer, the last of the "naked-eye" astronomers. He was known for the very high accuracy of his observations. In 1572, he detected a supernova in the constellation, Cassiopeia. This identified an error in Aristotle's claim that the heavens (the celestial spheres) never change. He was attracted to Copernicus' model for its mathematical beauty but was also attracted to the Ptolemaic model because of its dependence on Aristotelian philosophy and physics. In 1588, he announced his own "Tychoonian" system, which was a geo-heliocentric model with the Earth at the center, the Sun, Moon, and stars rotating around the Earth and the other five planets revolving around the Sun. In such a model, the orbits of the planets are mathematically equivalent to the orbits in the Copernican model. Therefore, as long as no force law is invoked to explain why the planets move as they do, there is no reason to prefer either the Tychoonian or Copernican system models. Furthermore, the Ptolemaic model was still a viable (but weakened) contender.

The next major contribution came from Johannes Kepler- (1571-1630). He was a German mathematician and astronomer who had been Tycho Brahe's assistant. He used Brahe's data to develop his first two laws of planetary motion: Planets travel in elliptical orbits with the Sun at one of the ellipse's focal points, and planets go fastest when they are closest to the Sun. (A line from the Sun to a planet will sweep out equal areas in equal times.)



These were published in 1609. His third law was published in 1619 and related the planet's period to its distance from the Sun. (The square of the planet's orbital period is proportional to the cube of its semi-major axis.)

The focus of the religious controversy was Galileo Galilei. Galileo (1564-1642) was an Italian physicist who has been termed the "Father of observational astronomy." In 1610, with his home-made telescope, he observed the four moons circling Jupiter and the phases of Venus. The latter could only happen if Venus was orbiting the Sun. The moons orbiting around Jupiter showed the error in the Aristotelian cosmology (and the Ptolemaic model) which held that all heavenly bodies should circle only the Earth. This left but two competitors, the Tychonian and Copernican models.

The Catholic authorities in the Vatican had largely overlooked the work of Copernicus due to their preoccupation with the challenges of the Reformation. But Galileo changed that. He was well known and respected for his work in mechanics and the dynamics of falling bodies. His astronomical discoveries added to his stature and gave him a large audience for his endorsement of Copernicus' model. The Vatican theologians became concerned when they realized that in the Copernican model the Earth moved. Now there are several passages in Scripture, particularly in the Psalms, where it states that "He made the world firm, not to be moved" (Psalm 93 Verse 1). They believed that God is the Author of the Scriptures and so there can be no error ("inerrancy"). They viewed Galileo's support of the heliocentric model to be an act of heresy. A trial at the Inquisition found that Galileo's was guilty as charged. He was forced to deny his belief in heliocentrism and was permitted to speak of it only as a hypothesis. Because of his age, Galileo was only put under house arrest. (As legend has it, as Galileo left the trial, he muttered "Even so, it still moves.") Subsequently, his writings and those of Kepler were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books,



Technically, the Inquisition was correct; Galileo's discoveries had only disproven the geocentric theory but had not proven the heliocentric model. That was Isaac Newton's contribution some 60 years later. The Vatican's problem with the Copernican model also faded with time. The growing awareness that ancient documents made use of various literary forms (history, poetry, exhortation, etc.,) indicated the likely presence of these same forms in Scripture. This posed a problem for the literal interpretation approach. (What is the literal interpretation of words in a poem?) The interpretation issue became part of the ongoing effort to better define the meaning of inerrancy. The Second Vatican Council in 1962 characterized the current effort by saying that the truth-value of a Scriptural passage should be judged by the writer's intention to communicate a salvific message to his faith community. David, the writer of the Psalms, wrote his psalms as poems to the Lord, praising Him for His glorious deeds. In the passage cited, David is recounting His marvelous deeds, including the creation of the world. He is not making a cosmological statement. (Galileo's writings were removed from the Index in 1757, and in 1992 the Vatican publicly acknowledged that Galileo was right and that it was wrong (a rare event!).

The last actor in this drama is Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727). He was a famous English scientist who made major contributions to physics and to mathematics. (His theory of gravity and his basic laws of motion formed the foundation of classic mechanics while his work in optics was equally fundamental. In mathematics, he developed Archimedes' concept of limits into the theory of the modern calculus.)

Newton used his classical mechanics and his law of universal gravitation to determine how the planets moved, i.e., he derived Kepler's laws of planetary motion. He published this in his 1687 "Principia Mathematica." This validated the heliocentric model proposed by Copernicus, as modified by Kepler; this is the model we use today.

HAPPY RECOLLECTIONS FROM SIMPLER TIMES

By Alice Begley

A long chat with several old city friends brought about reminiscences of nostalgic memories of over half a century ago that will never be seen in today's electronic, high-tech faster-paced world. I am sure today's Avila readers would be able to add a goodly number of the same.

Thoughts of a younger brother cranking up Father's blue Dodge as we awaited a half-day trip up to the farm in Mechanicville for a picnic. Then he would jump in to join the passengers.

The old ice box on the back porch where the ice man would carry a large square of ice on a tong, and then he would wave a cheery "good morning" to us kids in bed. And there was the "rag" man who came once a week and Mother dickered with him on the price she would get for a bag of rags. Usually it was five to ten cents.

Children on the street were afraid of sharp-faced Mary, the horseradish lady, all dressed in black as she pushed her cart through the street yelling, "Horseradish, fresh horseradish!" Someone would be sent down with a clean container to purchase the pungent treat.

Mr. McDonald sold chickens door-to-door on Saturday morning. Only the lady of the house went out to select the freshest one herself.

The insurance man knew that the weekly premium of 25 cents was in an envelope on the kitchen dish closet door. He would go in and take it himself if no one was home. The door was unlocked!

Who remembers the milk delivered to the back door? If it had been very cold outside the cream would freeze and the cap would rise out of the bottle. In the summer, if no one was home the milkman would just go into the house and put it in the ice box or refrigerator.



The Freihofer man had also been to the porch and delivered wonderful hot-cross buns during Lenten season!

Older Guilderland residents recall the Carolyn RR on Willey Street off Gipp Road, where youngsters got an after-dinner ride on the small choo-choo train for five cents. In Westmere, off Lehner Road, children took riding lessons on Saturday morning. The barn was demolished to make way for the Crossgates Mall parking lot. Before it was a horse barn, it was a roller-skating rink called the Rollatorium. Does anyone remember that?

And your first car ride to the airport to see an actual airplane take off! I'll bet Avila readers have a wealth of these memories.

NEWS AND VIEWS 2020

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Joseph Shapiro

Sometimes we gripe about the food we dine on, day after day, its lack of variety, its deviation from our favorites, the oddity of the names attributed to exotic dishes, the incompatibility with our dietary needs.

Perhaps a view of England during the Blitz when WWII destroyed its food supply, U-boat sinkings and Luftwaffe raids reduced the food supply drastically.

Marking those times, posted on the reconstructed central market wall in London is the following: Could you survive a week?

Weekly war-time rationing allowance:

- 3 pints of milk
- ¼-1lb. of meat
- 1 egg or 1 packet of dried eggs every 2 months
- 3-4 oz. of cheese
- 4 oz bacon and ham
- 2 oz. tea
- 8 oz. sugar
- 2 oz. butter
- 2 oz. cooking fat
- Plus 16 points a month for other rationed foods (usually, "subject to availability.")

Rationing continued until June 1954.



PASSOVER: THE JEWISH HOLIDAY OF STRUGGLE, FREEDOM AND HOPE

By Maxine Koblenz

The story of Passover is a tale for every person whose ancestors **struggled** against annihilation, persevered against insurmountable odds to achieve **freedom** and renewed **hope** for a better tomorrow.

Passover's tales, both sad and inspiring, and their meaning for today, give us reasons to learn from history and believe in our fight for freedom. It's a story that asks, "why is this night different;" an evening that marks a new beginning. A story that is told around a family's dinner table filled with songs, games and support of each other. A recognition of God's miracles. A reminder of the plagues that bring pain, anger, annoyance and trouble no matter their names or the years in which they arrive. A balancing of laughter and expressions of gratitude. A memory of eating unleavened bread lest we become "puffy" with false pride. An eating of bitter herbs to know how suffering can prepare us for the time of betterment. A reminder that though the tales may be brutal they, too, must be heard.



And so, as in yesteryear, we find ourselves once again in a struggle to confront the challenges of isolation, insecurity, disbelief, bitterness, sorrow and anger. We pray asking to calm our fear of the unknown as we reach for hope and normalcy in the year ahead.



THANK YOU, SHAWN HALL

By Sally Tiller

*Thank you, Shawn Hall, Avila's interim CEO
For sharing all the information you know
The coronavirus is a very serious situation
Something that has not been seen before by our nation
Your warm and caring ways
Help Avila residents make the most of their days
The housekeeping staff are doing a great job
Cleaning the common areas, including each doorknob
Thank you, dining room staff, for keeping residents well fed
That will keep residents well and out of bed
Thank you to the kitchen crew for all that you do
Starting with breakfast and meals all day through
Although activities residents are not seeing
We know that it is for residents' well being
And to the great maintenance staff
Thank you for all that you do so residents can continue to laugh
And to all administration, residents want to thank you
For the wonderful job that each day you do
We all hope to soon get back to normal and go our ways
So at Avila we can again have great days*

