

#3 – 906 St Charles Street, 18 December 2011

Dear Family and Friends,

Congratulations are in order. We are Gold Card Holders, with the attendant rites - and wrongs - of Seniority.

As such, New York City seemed the perfect place to celebrate this auspicious Coming of Age, since both daughter and daughter-in-law were in residence there in early August. As usual our route was not direct: we went via a wedding in Montreal, visits with sister Diana in Ville de Lac Brome and friends in Hudson and a few blissful days at the venerable Chateau Montebello (the erstwhile Seigneurie Club on the north shore of the Ottawa River) so that Bob could drive up to say his retirement good-bye to the AMA Ottawa office. Then ...

NYC by train! We set off for the Big Apple, where, with Sarah and Marcus and Rita and Jennifer and Simon, we painted the town red... well at least we coloured it rosy.... Besides the mandatory celebration supper in the Victorian comfort of the Central Park Boathouse, and worship at St. Thomas' Fifth Ave., we toured Manhattan by the Circle Line Cruise, walked for miles along the Hudson River, saw *Wicked* (the musical), visited the memorial at Ground Zero, and went to a Yankees Game at the new stadium. The visit's highlight was the Highline: an elevated railway access to the warehouses on the North River now converted to a serene, eco-friendly walkway.

Climbing aboard Amtrak once again, determined to return home by land, we traveled across America with short but memorable walks in several big cities, Washington DC, Santa Fe and Los Angeles, finally detraining at the port of Seattle to sail home on the Victoria Clipper. Our meandering journey allowed us a five-day stay in the beautiful high country of Santa Fe, including a night at the opera, with champagne picnic beforehand.

Entering Canada again, Bob had only 15 or so workdays left till retirement. But retirement began with a 3-month sabbatical fellowship at the University of Victoria Centre for Studies in Religion and Society where he continued his work on the Hebrew Psalter*. Look for volumes on *Seeing the Psalter* and *Hearing the Psalter* also – new music pouring out of his ancient fingers fulfilling his teenaged romantic ambition to write an opera. He keeps busy cycling to and from UVic daily.

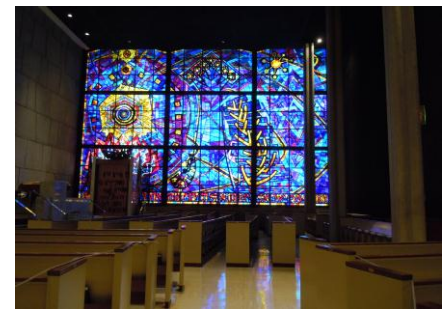
Right now we are home and coming to terms with living as retirees. Di is still active with the GVYO, although at a more sedate pace after the 25th anniversary year and the orchestra's west coast tour. We both do some choral singing, walking, cycling and as much tennis as we each can. We don't feel any older, still struggle with finding the balance in daily routines, but are fortunate to be in comparatively good health and to live in a place of exceptional beauty. How will the nation cope with us and our health needs as we age further? Will ya still need me? Will ya still feed me? ... Find out next year. We suspect the globe will experience more dramatic needs over the next 12 months. May we all treat each other with kindness. Then we will be treatable even in troubling times.



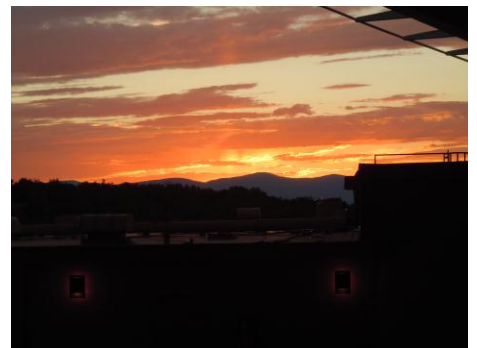
Rita and Diana dancing on the Highline



Window washer – from the Highline



Chicago Loop Synagogue - Sanctuary
(Artist Abraham Rattner)



Santa Fe Opera - Sunset from our seat

* His latest thesis, given the four acrostics in each of Books 1 and 5 of the Psalter and also in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, is that the Psalms were collected specifically in the context of the Babylonian exile. The puzzle lies initially in the words.