

Memories of Personal Excellence

Self-confidence is not lacking, which often got me in trouble. When I first started teaching mathematics at Basehor, I prepared very well, but soon discovered that the teacher's manuals were excellent tools and I could skip much of my study-to-teach days ahead and simply stay half a day ahead of the students. By the end of my math career, I was winging it, as we might say, with very little preparation. Is that being 'especially good' at teaching? No, I think it was not giving my best to the students and to the school. For a long time, I've been a teacher, as above in mathematics, and with Rabbi Polin's son in St Louis on guitar, and the last few decades in teaching people the Bible. There are times when I intensely studied, made sure I knew the front and back of any subject, and was ready to both solve problems and ensure that I could answer anticipated questions. But my confidence often outweighed my ability. Hemming and hawing and making up answers- not the way of a good teacher.

I'm pretty good at recall, at least until the last couple of years, as ageing and memory loss increase. But I used to be pretty good at trivia, which is not a good thing, when you think about it. It's simply memorized and usually useless data, I mean, good for water cooler information and perhaps boasting, but of what significance is that? I've always been mediocre in music, both singing in high school, even though I made

the madrigal choir and in guitar/ piano. Perhaps if I had studied piano more seriously with Opal Martin Larsen in my days in Somerset and Meadowbrook, I wouldn't be saying this today. But reality is there. I still play by ear, with little ability to read music. To some that's a gift; to me it's a requirement if I want to accompany myself or others.

I helped start various branches (stations) of Jews for Jesus, so I had an entrepreneurial capacity, and a bit of chutzpah, and used that same capacity to launch pickleball in Australia in 2017-2020, but was I especially good at it? Maybe some natural gifting in that, or maybe I'm just tall enough, loud enough, and brazen enough to withstand the difficulties and get it going well.

Exploring Imperfections: Desired Changes in Personal Habits

Sometimes I'm a bit self-assured and too confident, and I remember this story from the end of 2013 in Sydney. I was out and about in Sydney on the 21st December, and at my feet was my camera. In a bag. Along with three other lenses. And in a heartbeat, my camera was stolen. I turned away for less than a minute and then it was gone.

I felt naked. I felt bothered and wanted to kick myself for taking it off my shoulder. Wait, where is the thief? I looked around. I ran one way and then another.

Problem was the place where I was had a significant event on that night--The Carols in the Domain. Over 100,000 were gathering into the park to sing Christmas carols. Amazing, but I couldn't stay. I ran to a policeman and began the process of notification, submitting a report, etc.

Sunday the 22nd: I finalized the report with the police, giving them the actual serial numbers of the lenses and camera, and details about the bag itself. While I waited for the police in person to come over, an amazing thing happened. I saw a picture of the thieves.

Seems that the SD memory card which was inside my camera is from a company named "Eye-Fi" I programmed it a couple years before to upload any and all photos whenever it finds Wi-Fi and the camera is on (or if someone is using the card to upload onto their computer which has Wi-Fi) onto my Flickr site. And privately. That way I could upload the many pictures I take without having to 'do it myself.'

As a result of this behind-the-scenes action, I was able to see the pictures the thieves took of themselves. And no one would know I have these new photos. Each day the criminals or camera finders as they would like to be titled, would take more and more shots of themselves. I took a sample of their best and sent it almost daily to the police in Waverley.

So I gave them more and more, but I received no answer. After 5 days of waiting, and being overseas that waiting was aggravated, I asked on Facebook if anyone thought that I should put those photos up and ask for help. Most agreed that social media was powerful for such. That's what I did.

I sent the top 12 pix up to my FB page and within a few hours, detective work was in full swing. One friend saw a school sign; another saw some water; another saw a shopping centre. You get it, virtual sleuths.

But none so good as Anglican minister Daniel Connor who was a surveyor before he became a minister. Using his surveying skills he

figured out the exact address of the camera and sent it to me. I rang (it was 2 am in the US where I was) and spoke with the Windsor Police, and after jumping through some serious hoops, got them to go to the house, and within minutes the camera was in police lockup, safe and secure.

Amazing indeed!

All because of ...

- 1) An Eye-Fi card
- 2) People praying across the world (they told me so)
- 3) A surveyor/ minister who had skills
- 4) Police inaction which caused me to go to FB as a last resort
- 5) God, who really wants us to say 'thanks' and to say 'amazing!'

Hope that fixes up all your queries and lets you rejoice in the Almighty also.

As we say, 'too good!'

Oh, and now I'm much more careful with my belongings. At least, I'm trying.