Acts of Kindness in My Heart

One of the biggest is related to the high school reunions. I signed up and paid the $35 for my 10th in 1979, but that was the weekend when I flew with Patty to San Francisco for the JFJ Council interview. So didn't attend. And didn't attend the 25th either. But for some reason, and I think it was Facebook, I was inspired to go to our 40th in 2009. And by the 45th I was given the assignment of running the golf tournament (really just a bunch of us playing a round), then by the 50th, I was officially on the committee that planned things.

So at the 50th, I went to each event and filmed and shot stills, and later put a video together for remembrance's sake. Also at the 50th, in 2019, I ran the golf day with many more folks joining us, and also instigated and compered the Classmates' Storytime, a collection of 4 of our classmates sharing in 15-minute segments their story, what they want us to know about them and that, long before they die. Their own eulogy, but more a chronology and history. It was a highlight of the weekend.

All the photos and videos are here:

www.flickr.com/photos/bobmendo/albums/72157710706271541/

The overall video wrapped up and is here: youtu.be/UDMVGIY9nls

I have had crowds applaud me from Seoul, South Korea to Buenos Aires, Argentina, from Moscow, Russia to Melbourne, Australia. Honestly, those accolades are lovely and I today appreciate all the opportunities I've been given and the kind responses of the many. But when it comes to thanksgiving from those like the Reunion folks, from our school days 50 years to 60 years earlier when we first met, it is deeper. It seemed more real, and gave me a bigger sense of nachas.

That said, the best is when God says to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant." For that commendation I long and unto that day I work, I rest, and I live in his plans.

A sweet benefit extended to me in 2023/2024 was by Jews for Jesus. I'd been asking for a split year possibility and that eventuated with my being able to be an international snowbird. Half the year (March to September) in Nashville's spring/summer and half the year (Sept to March) in Sydney's spring/summer. That allows me to see my families in each place in an extended period and without rush and yet with plenty of good times. Thank God for that benefit.

COVID hit in March 2020 and the world shut down, but in Sydney, by the end of that month, I began taking Otto to the cafe in Lane Cove and treating him to a babycino, which then over time became breakfast, which then became hours and hours of train/ bus/ escalator

rides, play on city park equipment, trips to the museums or galleries, the zoos, almost anything and everything. Cockatoo Island, Manly Beach, Koorong, Meadowbank Park, anywhere and as much time as we could muster. After a couple of years, one Shabbat I rocked up to their place and found Dash in full gear, backpack and shoes on, hat in hand, and with one toy and one book at the ready.

I asked Dash what he was doing? "I'm going on the Adventure with Saba," he announced. Ever since that day, whenever we went, all three of us went. One time we even let Gigi go with us to Luna Park. She was great to have along. But this is really boys' time out.

The ministry gave me an opportunity in 2022 for which I'd been longing for a long time. To visit Ukraine. In 2014 I had gone to Moscow and St Petersburg and worked in chaplaincy with our teams during a campaign. That was great, but I wanted to go to Ukraine. At that time, Putin was stirring the nest, sabre rattling, they say, and the border was closed. Now as I write this, I imagine it would be very hard for me as a westerner to get into Ukraine. But after the war started in February 2022, I ached to go help. I asked and the ministry permitted me to go. I contacted a group of chemist shops and found Chemist Warehouse open to donate lots of pharmaceuticals and such, and United Airlines let me take everything for free onboard, and I flew to Warsaw. There I met with a quickly pulled together operation of staff, and we mobilised and served each day. One day Alex Adelson and I drove his rental car over to Ukraine where we met

with Tolik Emma who drove his car over from Kiev. It was spectacular and meaningful for me. One day I hope to return and see Zitomerskaya near Kiev from where my Bubbe Mary came. But for now, I'm glad with what I have received.



50th High school reunion Golf Day. I organized it. They made it especially great together.



My claim to fame, my 15 minutes, I compered the Classmates' Storytime with Sandahl Bergman, John Bagby. Cliff Illig, and Mary Pat Green.



My camera, ever with me during the weekend, and Jeanie Bottorff Rosenberg who was our main coordinator. She passed not long after the reunion. No mantle has been extended to anyone like her since then. Doubly missing her as a result.