

Holiday Letter 2023

Hello! I wish you peace, joy and great health for the new year. My past year was one of great transition as I moved from my longtime and beloved home of 10 years in Riverview Tower, Minneapolis to my new co-op in my childhood hometown of Philadelphia.

In **January** I sold my gorgeous condo in Minneapolis in a private sale. The rest of the month found me in bittersweet one-on-ones telling my many cherished



friends I would be moving back to Philadelphia. Telling my lifelong friend, Theo, during a lunch and my beloved Connie Osterbaan was truly difficult. My dear Claire

Lewis made a little farewell dinner for me at Riverview Tower with Kay and Steph. I dearly miss my Riverview Tower community. I ended the month with one of my many dinners with my brother of the heart, Mike Neaton.



In **February**, after selling my condo I found a shared house in my preferred West Mt. Airy neighborhood as a temporary option to give me time to discover where I'd eventually like to buy. Realizing I really needed to check out the shared house in person, I took a surprise trip. Woof! Woof! The place turned



out not to be an option. With my Minneapolis condo already sold, I had to find somewhere to live and fast! I gathered my closest circle of friends to help me and through David Meyers friend, Dr. Russ Harris, I found the hidden gem, purchasing my new co-op! I have a spacious two-bedroom dwelling that faces a strip of woodland in



Wissahickon Park with a luxury bathroom complete with whirlpool! Back in Minneapolis, I continued downsizing my possessions and meeting with dear friends for farewell gatherings. On what would have

been Martijn and my 14th wedding anniversary, dinner with Suzanne, Rich, Carol and Dave at Luci Ancora was a tonic. I can't express how much I love these Anam Ćara, soul friends. They are the wind beneath my wings.



A lunch with my longtime friend and financial advisor, Darrel Norling was so very special.

March was the month of my Big Move back to Philadelphia, jam packed with purging plants, furniture, artwork and clothing as well as bittersweet farewell visits with dear friends especially my Kathy, Bill & Kelson, and saying goodbye to my neighbors at Riverview Tower, Stephanie, Kay, A.J. and



Mona and the staff, Abbie and especially Randy. I spent as much time as I could in the pool and sauna – luxuries I miss terribly. And through all of the packing and moving and stress, my bestie, Mike Neaton, was a rock, taking me to the airport for the long flight home. Arriving here was filled with stressors. My unit needed to be thoroughly painted throughout and need a new fridge, stove top and countertop oven/microwave combi, requiring me to stay in an Airbnb for two weeks.



In **April** I finally got to move in! Great pals Steve and Ken and Marcy and Barbara came to my rescue! I began meeting my new neighbors and have made new friends here, especially Barbara White. Setting up a

new home is filled with small and big tasks but moving to a new state requires much administration as well, as I set up new cable, library, health care,

driver's license, insurance coverage, etc. I joined my Weavers Way Food Coop and began walking the neighborhood – one where I used to live – to reacquaint myself. I joined three different gyms since my Blue Cross/Blue Shield benefits allows it. All of



my glorious Thrusdaisies, sisters from my Girls' High class of 211, gathered at Deb Simon's Center City house with most of the husbands, too as a prelude to up to our

bigger Girls High 55th+ reunion the next day. Marcy Bacine, Sandy Fine Marker, Karen Ostroff Cohen, Dory Zatuchni Janice Gross, Diane Levy, Deb Cohen Mersky, and Dale Klein Barcham. I shared special times with Kate, Jeremy and Alison Tasch, Linda Feldman Hughes, and Sara Crimm. My longtime,



cherished friends, Mary Grace Gardner and Jackie McLaughlin, are my mainstays.



May and June entailed fixing up the new place and gathering with friends. Bob Ingram came in for a long weekend where we hooked up with my cherished, Greg Welsh. I began my volunteer shifts at

Weavers Way Coop, purchased beautiful house plants, and got the royal tour of Oaks Cloister Mansion, the historic site across the street owned by Dr. Russ Harris who helped me find my coop. I joined Woodmere Art Museum where I took a six-week portrait drawing course. For my PBS' Next Avenue column, I interviewed the world-famous chef, Lydia Bastianich. I also hosted a wonderful housewarming party. David and Roberta came in from Baltimore, Sandy Grant and hubby Richard came from Yardley and we had a full house. Taking in the Rittenhouse Square Art Fair, I spent a terrific afternoon with my cousin, Susan Kauffman, had a visit from dear friend, Steve Dock and four-footed

Nina, took a Mahjong Course at the Germantown



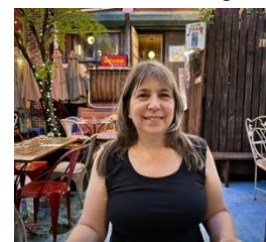
Jewish Center. Attended Girls High's 175 anniversary event with Marcy and Alex and Kate Tasch. Spent a wonderful day with Susan Levin at

Valley Green, had special times with Jackie and Grace, Rick and Ruth Snyderman and Steve and Ken, and Deb Mersky.

July: Hosted a few of my new neighbors, Margaret, April, Loretta and Barbara Thomas for a brunch in my unit, went to the Michener Art Museum in Doylestown with Steve and Ken and Barbie. Had a dreadful water backup in my unit which required replacing the kitchen sink cabinet. Made new friends, Arlene & Sandy, went to Brandywine Museum with Jackie and daughter, Nora for a great Joseph Stella exhibit. The highlight of my summer was spending a week with my friend Steve Dock at his amazing home on the magical island of Swans, aka Swan's Island, Maine. Steve is a terrific host, and the setting is sheer glory, nature at her finest.



August: Found me house and dog sitting for Lambert at Alex Tasch's Manhattan condo. I took in sights, scenes, art, theater and friends catching up with my cousin Jennifer, friends Janice, Sandy, Mark and Noriko Malaby and "Uncle" Richard.



September: Began Labor Day weekend with a great trip to see my friends, Dory Zatuchni and Joe and attend a festival in historic Arden, Delaware where dear friend Jeff Meyers and partner Jodi live. September was a bonus month for seeing art





and being in the great outdoors. Went with Marcy to the Barnes for a fantastic exhibit on outsider artist, William Edmondson. I made lots of trips to Morris Arboretum including one with Arlene Ketchum, catching a Fringe Festival performance together with her, too.

A big highlight was meeting the energetic, Jo Winter, executive director of the West Mt. Airy Neighbors Association (WMAN) and becoming active in this group. Autumn was also a time to catch up with lots of dear lifelong Philly friends,



like Kenny Hoffstein, my high school sweetheart,



Sherry Spector, a friend since junior high, and Gerald



Kolpan, who wrote and illustrated for our *South Street Star* newspaper. I was also busy making art, as I had four images from my “Lost Yiddish Civilization” collage series made into greeting cards. Jackie and I



attended the opening reception for the fabulous Barbara Bullock retrospective at Woodmere Art Museum. At the end of the month, I took a train to stay with David and Roberta in

Baltimore for an amazing long weekend of dinners out, a Baltimore Symphony Orchestra performance, and a stellar trip to Washington, D. C. to see a native American exhibit at the Smithsonian and a much anticipated visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

October: During this season of many festivals, I attended our own West Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill street fairs. I also spent many months under the expert care of my physical therapist, Nikiah Childs, and Ellie Dukes,



my massage therapist, both of whom moved the needle on a few hip, knee and back issues! I had another train ride to spend a week with my dear friend, Steve Dock and Nina in Vermont! Steve has relocated from Austin, Texas, where I spent time

with him last year, to Chester, VT, to be close to his daughter, Nora and family. We were nonstop visiting



the sights, hiking, doing cultural activities and eating! Steve is a wonderful and gracious host! I finally got up the



guts to drive to, gasp, New Jersey, for a second visit with my cherished friend Susan Levin. We had a blast visiting an historic village, eating and antiquing. And, I survived the drive!

November and December: David and Roberta came



back to attend the legendary Philadelphia Crafts Show.

Thanksgiving was cozy and grand at Mary Grace’s with son, Jake, in from California. I registered for another

drawing class, and finally met up with old friend, Donna Greenberg, for a visit to

Drexel University’s fun Electric Factory concerts exhibit.

Dory and Joe came up to see the outdoor train

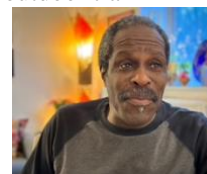


exhibit at Morris Arboretum, but alas, we were rained out yet still had a marvelous time! Caught up with dear old friend, Bernie Wilson, spent a festive



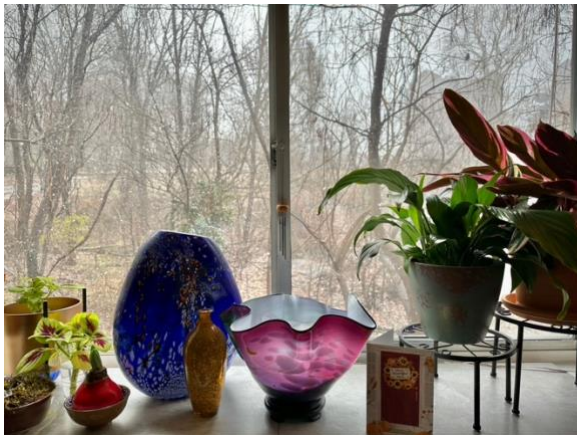
dinner and the theater evening with Steve and Ken and new friend, Joe Brown. I hosted a Hanukkah gathering at my

place for Jackie and Grace and my other new friend and neighbor, Barbara White. I finally got to spend a lovely evening with my childhood friends, Karen and Mark Cohen.



To end the year, I took the train for a long weekend staying with Janice and Larry in Staten Island and meeting up with Sandy for a lovely Manhattan lunch.

Throughout the months of settling in, I've been taking good care of my health, finding new doctors, body workers, dentist, gyms. My neighborhood is literally "three points" – the intersection of Germantown, W. Mt. Airy and East Falls, with



Roxborough, Manayunk and Chestnut Hill neighborhoods a ten-minute drive away.

And my new nest is literally nestled in the woods. I've gone from a birds' eye view of the Mississippi River to a squirrel's eye view of Wissahickon Woods!

Final Reflections: I left Philadelphia in 1988, when I was a little over 37-years-old and have returned 35 years later at age 73. I look at the palindrome those numbers create – 3773 – seeking a mystical message

in the double 10s the combination digits to, hoping that I've made a wise decision.

For many years I have been pondering a return to Philly. Before he discovered the cancer that took his life 15 years ago, my beloved Martijn said he'd like to live here, discussing it often while I was completing my degree in Maastricht. He loved Philadelphia's colonial architecture. Its walkability.



Its coziness. The Art Museum. The row houses reminded him of the Netherlands, and he thought perhaps he'd have a better opportunity here to teach philosophy. So, in a way, I've brought him here, in my heart, with me.

Being back in the surroundings of my youth provides a comforting familiarity and point of reference. It's a positive for writing my memoir. My new home is far more affordable, and that brings some peace of mind. And, rebuilding my lifelong friendships, making new ones, finding new creative and civic challenges, stimulates my innovativeness and keeps me young.

The move itself was taxing. However, settling in ignited my imagination. I got to create another beautiful space. And, as always, I have a guest room and hope to host you.

The world as we know it is changing rapidly. While we still have our health, we must take advantage to continue to learn, to grow, to strengthen old contacts and make new connections. I am grateful to have you in my innermost sphere.

May your days be filled with wonder, your soul with grace, your mind with imagination, your body with health, and your heart with love.

xoxxo

Suze