



## LOWCOUNTRY MUSINGS

November 2018

### A JOURNAL THROUGH TIME

By Florence Bothwell Cosby

*November*



Photo by David Cosby ~

*I see skies of blue, clouds of white.  
Bright blessed days, dark sacred nights.  
And I think to myself,  
What a wonderful world.*

Written by Bob Thiele and George Davis Weiss

Louis Armstrong~ *What a Wonderful World*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWzrABouyeE>



The annual *Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards* is a world-wide photo competition aimed to raise awareness of wildlife conservation as well as to make us smile. All the winning photos are of animals in the wild caught in the act of doing something funny or out of the ordinary. One is a tiny dormouse in Italy clinging to a yarrow flower with a silly expression on its face, another is a sea otter floating on its back in Monterey, California, seemingly laughing at the photographer, and yet another is a trio of

penguins marching towards the doorway of a church on South Georgia Island near Antarctica. But my favorite comedy photo is of three owls, with two of them snuggling together and the third one staring at the photographer as if they have been rudely interrupted.



The photo of the three owls reminds me of a couple of owls who lived near our rural house on James Island—one a screech owl and the other a barred owl. We often heard them in the trees at night, but rarely caught a glimpse of their presence.



One memorable evening, the weather was comfortable enough to open the back-kitchen door which faced onto the patio and woodsy area beyond. We had numerous bird-feeding stations there, and two birdbaths for our feathered visitors, including one birdbath bowl sitting directly on the grass for the squirrels and other ground creatures. I was closing up the house for the night and was about to shut the kitchen door when I spotted a small brown screech owl squatting in the middle of the ground-level birdbath. He seemed to be enjoying a bit of a splash before setting about his nocturnal adventures. Why he chose the lower bath surprised me, as it seemed to place him at a more vulnerable level than his usual lofty perches. We stood and stared at each other for a while, much like the photographer shooting the owl trio above, patiently and painstakingly making camera adjustments for optimum image results. And as with the award-winning owls, my little owl seemed to be inquiring—*Who-o-o are you looking at?*



Although officially designated as November 2, I celebrate National Men Make Dinner Day every day of the week, the month, the year—and have for several years now. David and I have always enjoyed planning and preparing meals together, although for most of the years we were working, I did the daily meal cooking—mainly because I got home from work first—with him joining in on weekends, holidays, and special occasions. But in recent years, since we have retired, he has pretty much taken over the kitchen. He is an enthusiastic and talented cook, and asks only that I plan the menus, choose the recipes, and compile the grocery list—Deal!



We have generously outfitted David's kitchen with equipment and gadgets that suit his cooking style and preferences, and his love of quality products. He is precise and particular about his recipes, striving for excellence and perfection. David cooks like he is still in one of his college chemistry labs, with precise attention to measurement and ingredient combinations. No such thing as winging it, or a splash of this and a dash of that, for fear that the kitchen will blow up if he should stray from exacting detail.



Last night David made the first of what we consider fall and winter recipes—beer-braised chuck roast with onions and mushrooms. He began his prep work in the early afternoon and had the braiser in the oven for three or four hours throughout the day. The aroma was wonderful, making our anticipation for dinner even greater. He served the chuck roast with pre-packaged mashed potatoes that are heated in the microwave—a product that is the complete opposite to the carefully prepared beef but is delicious just the same. During dinner, we were commenting about the years past when Cameron was still young enough to be living with us, when this meal would also have included a couple of cans of green beans, a package of Crescent Rolls, and a large salad—with no leftovers for another meal. We miss our little guy and his enormous appetite but have since reduced the number and quantity of dishes we serve for just the two of us. Cameron has often told us, now that he is grown and flown, how much he misses Pop's cooking—especially this chuck roast and gravy meal, even though when he was young he called it "old people food." So, *Happy Men Make Dinner Day* to you, David—and many more!



Daylight Saving Time ends on November 4, at 2:00 a.m. to be exact. At which time, it will be 1:00 a.m. It is *Fall Back* time. I don't like the bi-annual time changes, as they throw me off balance for several days before I acknowledge that what the clock says is correct, not my intuition that it *should* be a certain time, based on how daylight and night time seem to appear.



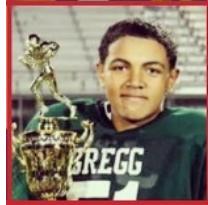
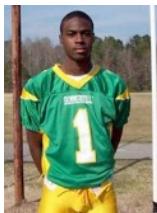
I awoke this morning at 6:32, and immediately wondered if my bedside clock or phone had automatically changed. So, I got up in the dark to turn on my computer to verify the time, then went to change all the clocks (four of them) in the kitchen. But by then I was definitely awake and totally confused, and here it wasn't even 6:00 yet—real time, not imagined time—and now even further from daybreak. So much for the joys of time changes.



One year when we were living in Santa Barbara, we had forgotten the fall time change, and went about our normal Sunday routine—preparing our NFL Treat Tray and tuning our TV in to the game of the day—most likely the Los Angeles Rams, as that was the team we rooted for in the days when we were in SB and they were in LA, the first time. We were astonished to discover that the pre-game chit-chat was still in progress, and impatiently sat there in front of the TV awaiting kick-off so we could begin our snacks and our game viewing. Well, we finally had our *Duh!* moment and realized our mistake but had to wait the remainder of the hour before real time caught up with us. By then we had put a bit of a dent in our Treat Tray. Well, we never again missed a time change—especially during football season—and we still smile at the memory of that day our Sunday fun *fell back* an hour off schedule.

❖

Cameron called yesterday to say hello and to chat with us a bit. At the time, I was reading an article online at ESPN about A.J. Green, a wide receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals, who had been ejected from the Thursday night game for brawling with a member of the opposing team. I mentioned this to Cameron, and he was as surprised by the confrontation as I was, knowing that A.J. is notoriously quiet, calm, and controlled. It was an incredibly rare occurrence for A.J. to become so uncharacteristically agitated that he erupted into a fight right there on the playing field.



A.J.

C.J.

Adriel Jeremiah “A.J.” Green is a Summerville native and a hero in Cameron’s eyes from when he was beginning his own years in football at the age of nine. At that time, A.J. played for Summerville High School, then went on to play for the Georgia Bulldogs, before being drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals, where he continues to play as wide receiver. He has been an award-winning athlete and a role model for boys who strive to emulate not only his athletic skills, but his positive values and spirit for success.

Cameron—whose middle name is Jai—admired A.J. so much that he adopted A.J.’s style of nickname, calling himself C.J. Cosby from the moment he entered 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Gregg Middle School. He wrote C.J. on all his school papers, and was routinely called that by his teachers, coaches, and classmates. Apparently, everyone knew about this—except us.

When Cat and David scheduled their first conference at Gregg, they met with all his teachers, his football coach, the guidance counselor, and the assistant principal—a routine gathering for incoming families. After everyone had been introduced, the guidance counselor began conveying the relevant

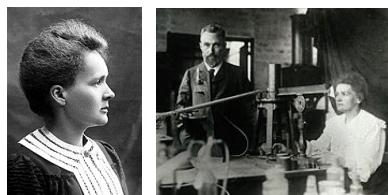
information about Cameron's progress so far in middle school. They kept referring to "C.J.", which puzzled Cati and David, as they had no idea who that person was. Cati finally interrupted and asked if perhaps they were in the wrong conference, as they did not know this "C.J." person. Everyone else there exchanged equally puzzled looks, as that is the only name they knew him by. Well, it finally came out that Cameron had taken the nickname as his primary identification but had failed to inform his family! Once this was straightened out, everyone had a good chuckle at the confusion, and the conference progressed from there—a discussion of C.J. Cosby.

Cameron continued to be C.J. to his teachers, coaches, and friends all through middle school and high school, but he still wanted to be Cameron at home with us. He said that C.J. was his school name, and Cameron was for family. We have noticed that his girlfriend Brie still calls him C.J., mostly out of habit, as that is who he was when they first met. But Cati has observed that when Brie wants to be firm with him, he is elevated to the more formal appellation of Cameron, much like moms do with their kids when they want to get their attention for some oversight or misstep in their behavior—*Cameron, pick up your socks...and now the other one.*

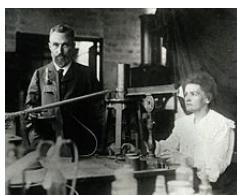
For the record, C.J.'s football team at Gregg Middle School ended their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year as undefeated division champions, with C.J. Cosby as one of their star players. *Go Mustangs!*



I subscribe to the Smithsonian.com daily newsletter, which includes a compendium of about six or eight short articles from a wide range of topics. It is delivered to my email inbox each night around 6:00, giving me some enjoyable reading matter for the early evening. Last night's issue contained an article commemorating the 151<sup>st</sup> birthday of Marie Curie, the Polish and naturalized-French physicist and chemist. She was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, the first person and only woman to win the Nobel Prize twice, and the only person to win the Nobel Prize in two different sciences. As well, she was part of the Curie family legacy of five Nobel Prizes.



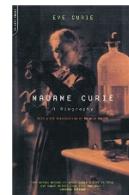
1903



Pierre and Marie



Nobel Prize in Physics 1903  
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1911



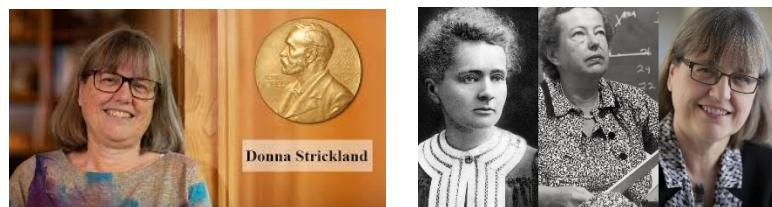
1960

The summer before I left for Syracuse University as an incoming freshman, I immersed myself in tackling a booklist of titles suggested for students beginning their first year of college. At the time, I had a summer job to which I commuted by train each day. That afforded me abundant time to read without interruption. My favorite book from that summer of reading engagement was a biography of Marie Curie written by her daughter Eve Curie. I became totally absorbed in the amazing life of this gifted woman. I admired her so much that she became my object of inspiration and remained as such for years to follow.

I was just embarking on my own life as an independent person, with a thirst for knowledge, widening experiences, and role models to follow. Marie Curie's intelligence and accomplishments were well beyond my abilities, but that is not what inspired me. It was her dedication to her work, her tireless

efforts to reach her goals, her strong sense of family, and her commitment to her place in the scientific world, regardless of the barriers against women. She was known for her honesty and moderate life-style. She shared her monetary winnings with colleagues, students, and friends, and refrained from patenting her radium-isolation process so that others in the scientific community could benefit from her research unhindered by access restrictions. The enormity of her intellect and her generosity of spirit remained unsullied by her fame and fortune.

Marie Curie died nearly a decade before I was even born, and nearly three decades before I met her as a person of greatness in the biography I read that summer of my enlightenment. But the memory of her impact on my young mind remains with me on this the anniversary of her birth.



Last month, Sweden's Royal Academy of Sciences announced the Nobel Prize in Physics, awarded to three scientists for their work on high-intensity laser pulses described as "revolutionary" and "bringing science fiction into reality." One of the winners, Professor Donna Strickland at the University of Waterloo in Canada, became only the third woman to win a Nobel Prize for physics—Marie Curie being the first and Maria Goeppert Mayer the second, 60 years later.

In the past, women have been underrepresented in the fields of science and technology, with the greatest disparity in physics. When I was in high school, I was one of only two girls in Mr. Breidenbach's Physics class—Gail Thompson THS '60 was the other. A change to that glaring disparity, however, is being more rapidly seen now that STEM programs are prominent in school instruction, and young women are actively supported to pursue their dreams and interests in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in an interdisciplinary and applied approach.

Sarah Phillips, granddaughter of our classmate Ellen Petersen THS '60, is a stunning example of how women are earning a more recognized and applauded place in the field of physics. Sarah is an honors student at the University of Maryland – College Park, which actively recruits women as physics majors.





LHC – Geneva

Rachel, Julia, Zack, Sarah

CERN, Geneva

Sarah is currently studying abroad at the International Studies Institute (ISI) in Florence, Italy. She is one of three young women and one young man in the Physics program there. Sarah is focusing on particle physics and recently traveled with her group and their Physics professor from Florence to Geneva to view and study the Large Hadron Collider (LHC)—the world's largest and most powerful particle collider and the largest machine in the world, built by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and which lies in a tunnel 17 miles in circumference and 574 feet deep beneath the France-Switzerland border (I had to look all that up!). Good luck to all of them in their studies, to the amazing experiences widely available to them, and to the unlimited opportunities that lie ahead. Hopefully, young women such as Sarah, Rachel, and Julia will one day join the revered ranks of Marie, Maria, and Donna.



I read an article recently about the Harris Poll annual survey conducted online nationwide, asking the question, “What food would you eat if you could eat only one food for the rest of your life?” For the second year in a row, PIZZA has been the leading choice among pollsters.

<https://www.cpk.com/pizzasurvey>

With this in mind, I wonder how I have gotten this far into my *Journal* writing and not have mentioned pizza. We make the best at-home pizza, sometimes as often as once a week, with as much enjoyment in the preparation as in the eating. Not only is the crust a winner, but the toppings are fun and varied. The other night we had a pizza with no sauce, just mozzarella with red, green, and yellow bell pepper as well as jalapeño for heat. Tonight, it will be Kalamata olives, capers, and garlic, with a homemade pizza sauce. We make the sauce in a large batch, then freeze disks in a muffin tin, to save for later use. The toppings are always fresh, expertly sliced, diced, or shredded, and carefully arranged on the cheese. Then baked to, well, perfection. We then bring it to the table on a small footed cutting board, so we can serve ourselves, just like in a pizzeria. By contrast, on lazy nights, we heat up a DiGiorno frozen pizza, Rising Crust Supreme. No fuss, no bother, but always tasty.





When I was a kid growing up on Staten Island, pizza was pretty much unknown to us. There was one small “pizza parlor” a few miles from us—off of Arthur Kill Rd. in Richmondtown—where you could order a “tomato pie” to go. It was a standard pizza, with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese, and that’s about it. The only time we had it was when my cousin Ruth came to visit with her Italian husband Nick, who would drive to the restaurant to order it and wait for the pizza to be baked, then bring home the entire pie in a cardboard box. No such thing as ordering by phone or online and having it ready for pick-up or delivered. It was delicious, with my favorite flavors of tomato and cheese. When I was in high school, we discovered a pizza place called Nunzio’s in Grant City on Hylan Blvd., a quiet neighborhood but on a main highway. It was the go-to location for Friday night food after a basketball game, where most kids bought a slice or two served on a paper plate. I don’t think anything has ever tasted so good—plain and simple, just like the old days were.



*The Post & Courier* online news daily survey posed the question—*Would you rather see the Northern Lights or Niagara Falls?* A third answer option enabled the responder to choose—I have seen both. That made me smile, as I have indeed seen both, although quite some time ago. But the visual impact of each one is such that the image is not easily forgotten.



When I was about ten-years-old, our extended family of seven were all at Lake George together for about two weeks’ vacation. During that time, my Uncle Bob arranged several outings to visit historic sites and places of interest in Upstate New York. One of those was a two-day trip to Niagara Falls. We left our cottages at the lake at first light for the long drive west to the falls. I remember waking up from a nap in the car to the thunderous sound of the water cascading over the falls. At first sight, the enormity of the falls was startling, and I know I gasped at the breathtaking beauty of this marvel of nature. We strolled along the boardwalks on the surrounding area, enjoying the experience from several angles. My mother loved standing at the edge of the railing, gazing in wonder at the power and force of the ever-moving Niagara River. She said that for her it was a dream come true. Later we ate a snack-bar lunch at a picnic table, with our milk served in a miniature glass bottle with a straw for sipping. Although not at all comparable to the magnificence of the falls, it, too, remains in my visual memory as one of the treats for the day.

Years later when I was a student at Syracuse University, word spread around campus that the northern lights—or aurora borealis as it is also known—would be clearly visible from the higher points in the area. It is a natural light display in the earth’s sky, predominantly seen in the higher latitudes—both southern and northern—and caused by “*collisions between electrically charged particles from the sun that enter the earth’s atmosphere.*” I was unfamiliar with the phenomenon, and so I joined a group of friends and classmates who would be trekking up to nearby Thornden Park for maximum unobstructed viewing of the spectacle. And it was spectacular, like nothing I had ever seen before, or since. The colors most associated with the northern lights are green and yellow, although blues and magentas are occasionally seen. The trails of light swirled around the heavens as far as the eyes could see, much like drizzling paint onto a wet sheet of paper in my art classes and watching the color disperse in all directions, but on a much grander scale.

Both the rushing waters of Niagara Falls, and the dancing colors of the northern lights are natural wonders on an enormous scale—magical sights to behold, that leave one breathless with awe and delight.



Our backyard squirrels keep getting cuter by the day, although only two remain of the original trio. But they are growing and maturing and still seem to hang out as a pair. One morning they were both eating the spillage from the sunflower feeder, sitting so close to each other that they were touching shoulders. They looked like a mirror image from side to side.



The other morning David happened to glance out the window next to his desk and spotted one of the squirrels spread out on his belly in the platform feeder. He was obviously not eating but was stretched from nose to tail-tip across the width of the feeder. His front paws gripped the edge of the platform, his head hung over the side, his back paws were splayed outward, and his fluffy tail extended straight back from his body. We figure he was just chillin’. But it had been warm outside for about a week or so—highs in the low 80s—so perhaps he actually was cooling off for a spell, or soaking up the last warmth of fall before winter sets in.



An article in yesterday’s *Time* online magazine featured *The One Dish Chefs Say You Should Never Serve at Thanksgiving Dinner*—sweet potato casserole with broiled marshmallows on top. Many of the noted chefs at fine restaurants and on TV shows have banned the dish to—well, not even the back burner. They variously said that it is too sweet-on-sweet, too soft-with-soft, too over-that-one, and too just-plain-boring. Sorry folks, but in our family, that is not the case. Cati made it for her restaurant menu earlier this week, and the diners thought it was amazingly delicious. She brought some of the leftovers down for us to enjoy as well. This year, each one of us specifically asked for that dish to be included in our feast of seasonal delights.



According to another article—also yesterday—in *Smithsonian* online, sweet potato pudding, as it was originally named, has been part of the American cuisine for a century. Although the use of sweet potatoes as a vegetable was first introduced to Columbus by the Native Americans, the addition of the marshmallow topping did not appear in American cookbook recipes until centuries later. The Angelus company that sold Cracker Jacks introduced marshmallows for mass marketing in 1907 but were not successful in popularizing the production. In 1917 they appealed to the *Boston Cooking School Magazine* to develop recipes that included marshmallows in their ingredients. The resulting cookbook included instant classics—brownies mixed with marshmallow bits, hot cocoa with marshmallows melting on top, and the first documented appearance of sweet potato casserole baked with a marshmallow topping. Yay! In our family, it is a delicious must-have addition to our Thanksgiving feast—with thanks to the Cracker Jacks company and Fanny Farmer.



I like to decorate the house for the holidays, to make its appearance mirror the specialness of our family celebrations. I did so when Cati was young and continued for Cameron as a little guy. Included in our decorating were kitchen towels, small figurines, table arrangements, a wreath on the door, and of course the drawings they brought home from school. We saved these items from one year to the next in a large plastic tub in the garage, to be brought out again the next year. Now that Cameron is an adult and on his own, we have discarded many of the holiday standbys, saving only those few pieces that are still in useable condition and which suit my scaled-down approach to decorating.

Yesterday, I ventured out to the garage to the holiday tub and dug out the Thanksgiving decorations that remain as my favorites. There is a plump turkey bird made from several colors of velvet fabric, with leaf-like cutouts for feathers, buttons for its features, and machine-stitched edging in a contrasting color of thread. It sits on the kitchen bar with its tail fanned out and visually greets us as we come and go. Everyone likes the way it looks, and the feel of the velvety feathers. But my favorite Thanksgiving image is the cornucopia. I first learned the meaning of that word in my high school Latin I class—*cornu* meaning horn, and *copia* meaning of plenty—the horn of plenty. It represents the abundance of the fall harvest and is attributed to several Greek and Roman deities who are associated with agricultural wealth and prosperity, as well as spiritual bounty.



When I was teaching art prior to my retirement, each year I had students create their own drawing of a cornucopia. I had purchased wicker baskets to represent the horn, plus a selection of dried gourds and

real fruit, leaves, and nuts, then set up several tablescapes around the art room for students to draw from for their cornucopias. Markers were used to color the items filling the basket, because of their vivid color and ease of application. The ultimate drawing was intended as a suitable decoration for each child to take home to provide their own holiday décor. Many of their grandmas hung the cornucopia depictions on the front door to greet guests, or on the wall above the buffet table for their family feast.



I have arranged a cornucopia on the chopping-block table in our dining area, this year filled with an artificial seasonal bouquet. There are holiday placemats on the table that have cornucopias woven into their design of brimming abundance. I love the fall colors—the deep tones of ripened fruits and autumnal foliage—to enhance the Thanksgiving spirit we will all enjoy later this week.



November 22 just happens to be National Cranberry Relish Day, which this year just happens to also be Thanksgiving Day, and which we just happen to be making the day before, so today is a happening day.



My mother always served Ocean Spray cranberry sauce from a can, with those distinctive ringed markings around the cylinder of the product. I liked the canned cranberry sauce, and still do—in fact, we have a can in the refrigerator now, to serve sliced on turkey sandwiches. But for our Thanksgiving Day table, we prefer to include a homemade cranberry relish on our holiday menu. David prepared a batch this morning, to get a head start on tomorrow's marathon of cooking.

Our go-to recipe is from the Williams-Sonoma Kitchen Library *Thanksgiving & Christmas* cookbook. Although it was published in 1999, I found pictures of the steps in the recipe on Google Images. So that sequence pretty much sums it up—orange peel and juice, chopped apple, fresh cranberries, lots of sugar, plus cinnamon and cloves. Cook it all together until thickened, softened, and bursting. *Voilà!* A ruby-red bowl of holiday delight.

<https://www.williams-sonoma.com/recipe/apple-orange-cranberry-sauce.html>



When Cati was two-years-old, we lived in Maine. It was the first year that she was actively aware of the character balloons and musical floats that were part of the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The TV was on in the living room, where she watched with rapt attention. As each themed attraction was presented on the screen, she would run down the hall to her room, rummage through her dress-up box, and don some sort of garment, hat, or accessory that related to the balloon or float being featured. This was not an easy feat, as the progression of the parade moved quickly, and often would be on to a new

theme before she had returned costumed as the previous one. She would then dash back to her room to make a quick change and join the parade once again.



That year, 1979, was also the first awareness she had of the lavish table setting and special feast that accompanied the holiday. Her Uncle Jack was visiting, and so we strove to make it extra festive. We set the dining room table with our good china—which we still have and continue to use for Thanksgiving—silver flatware, crystal, linen tablecloth, candles, and of course a cornucopia centerpiece—with real fruits and nuts. As a little girl Cati was so pleased with her inclusion in the holiday festivities, much the way she was this year as she cooked, dressed in a special outfit, and brought her unique brand of happiness and joy to our family gathering.



Blasé Day is observed annually on November 25. The word *blasé* is of French origin, and means to be *indifferent, bored, or unimpressed, as if from an excess of worldly pleasures*. Kind of like “Ho, hum.”



The word *blasé* immediately reminds me of one of our favorite spots in Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod—**CAFÉ BLASÉ**. With an inviting outdoor patio dining area, it was a place to sit a spell, kick back, and watch the world pass by, all while enjoying a refreshing beverage and a tasty meal or snack. So, for us, *blasé* means more of an opportunity to chill out, relax, let any stress ease away. But the best feature of Café Blasé was that dogs were welcome on the open-air patio, and in fact were immediately served their bowl of water and biscuits before their humans were attended to. My mother always took her two dogs there, and our Lindy accompanied us as well. What’s not to like about a pet-friendly patch of peaceful retreat.



November 28 is the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree, which has been televised on NBC since 1951, with much singing, dancing, and holiday merriment leading up to the lighting of the tree. The annual tradition of erecting and decorating an enormous tree began in 1933, in an effort to bring about some much-needed Depression-era cheer for Rockefeller Center construction workers. Each year since, the tree and its lights and ornaments have become more and more elaborate, with its current 75-foot Norway spruce topped by a 550-pound Swarovski crystal star. The night of the tree lighting attracts tens of thousands of visitors, as well as hundreds of millions more watching on television. The tree, in its world-renowned setting, is one of NYC's most popular holiday attractions, drawing 125 million visitors during the holiday season, from all corners of the City and around the world.



I have never seen the tree lighting in person but have included a trip to admire the lighted tree pretty much every Christmas when I was growing up as well as when we lived in the metropolitan area as adults. Each time, the Rockefeller tree and skating rink have been on our itinerary for a holiday excursion into the City. The last time we saw the tree together was in 1995, the Christmas before we moved to the Lowcountry. Now, watching the ceremonial lighting on TV is a part of our kick-off to the holidays, although it does not replace the pleasure and awe of standing at the base of the tree and looking up into its immense and imposing decorated beauty. For me, it symbolizes the epitome of a shared holiday spirit.



Here it is, the end of November and the temperature in Summerville is 77°. Not what I remember about the month when I was growing up, especially the week after Thanksgiving—48° and raining today in Manhattan. The last time we lived in the northeast—in New Jersey—we had traveled into Manhattan the end of November for a sport show that David was attending at the Roosevelt Hotel in mid-town. While he was schmoozing with his friends and colleagues at the event, Cati—at around age ten or so—and I took a leisurely stroll around the adjoining streets and shopping areas. It had been gray and gloomy all day, but then the wind and rain kicked up and it turned into the most miserable day to be out and about. But we were intrepid and huddled under our umbrella, to continue on our outdoor adventure. To our shock and amazement, we struggled to keep our meager umbrella from turning inside-out, and soon gave up our fruitless attempts at remaining dry. Apparently, others were also battling the forces of nature, as we passed many destroyed and abandoned umbrellas along the way—in gutters, trash cans, or the middle of the sidewalk. The hideous weather was an unrelenting foe—nothing lasts forever like the cold November rain.



A few years later—1992—the singer Axl Rose and his hard rock band Guns N' Roses released a single from one of their albums, called “November Rain.” It is a lengthy ballad with a powerful message of love and despair—quite depressing—the kind of melody and lyrics that get into your head and work on your own feelings of unhappiness and heartbreak. But I always took a more literal attitude toward the song, extracting a few of the verses to apply more to the moods of endlessly unpleasant weather. Not what Axl had in mind, but I have made it personal to myself, to the effect that climate has on my own emotional tone. And now, these many years later, I still think of that cold dreary day when Cati and I walked through the rainy streets of Manhattan, and how we did eventually escape the endless chill of the northeast—nothing lasts forever, even cold November rain.



*NOTHING LASTS FOREVER  
 AND WE BOTH KNOW HEARTS CAN CHANGE  
 AND IT'S HARD TO HOLD A CANDLE  
 IN THE COLD NOVEMBER RAIN*  
 ~  
*SO NEVER MIND THE DARKNESS  
 WE STILL CAN FIND A WAY  
 'CAUSE NOTHIN' LASTS FOREVER  
 EVEN COLD NOVEMBER RAIN*



And speaking of rain...

Last night we watched the movie *Singin' in the Rain* from 1952. It is a delightful musical with catchy tunes and amazing dance numbers, full of energy and polished talent from the major stars—Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and Debbie Reynolds. It is on several lists for “Must See” movies, including from Roger Ebert, whose evaluations are well respected and acknowledged.



A Broadway production of *Singin' in the Rain* opened at the Gershwin Theatre in July 1985. Cati and I treated my mother/her grandmother to a Sunday matinee in front-and-center seats. My mother was thrilled, as she always loved a Broadway show, and especially a romantic musical. Although the production was dramatically revamped from the movie version to suit the size and limitations of a theater stage, it maintained the basic elements of the plot, as well as the tuneful songs and athletic choreography. Most memorable was the classic title song number, with authentic rain, sloshy puddles,

and flooded gutters right there on the theater stage. Don Correia gave a vibrant performance in the Gene Kelly role. It was a show stopper and had my mother cheering and clapping with enthusiastic enjoyment. A happy rainy day.

Gene Kelly ~ *Singin' in the Rain*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1ZYhVpdXbQ>



FMC 11/2018

[fmcosby43@gmail.com](mailto:fmcosby43@gmail.com)

☛ Please check back next month for the **December** entry to this *Journal through Time*.