Comings & Goings

Upcoming events:

• BINGO
  Come join the fun every second and fourth Friday of the month from 1:00pm – 2:30pm at the Roxbury Park Community Center. Cost is 25 cents per card.

• VALENTINE’S DAY DANCE
  Monday, February 11 • 1pm - 3pm
  Roxbury Community Center
  BHAAC Members are FREE
  Non-members $5
  RSVP is required.
  Please call 310.285.9840

• EXCURSION
  The Peterson and Broad Museums
  Wednesday, March 13
  $48 for BHAAC Members
  $60 for non-members
  Register at Roxbury Community Center
  Cash or check made out to BHAAC

• HEALTHY LIVING WORKSHOP BY CEDARS-SINAI AND AARP
  March 6 - April 17
  Meets Wednesdays 1pm - 3pm
  Roxbury Community Center - Centennial Room
  For more information, call Katrina Rosales at 310.248.6242

CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE BEVERLY HILLS ACTIVE ADULT CLUB (BHAAC) TO BE PART OF THESE EVENTS!

Beverly Hills Active Adult Club Membership

Membership is open to anyone 55 years or older.
Your card is valid July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019.
Benefits include FREE or discounted admission on ALL activities, excursions, including FREE admission to the upcoming Beverly Hills Police Officers’ Association Valentine Dessert & Dance. The Annual Membership cost is:
Beverly Hills Resident: $5.00
Non-Resident: $7.00
$2.50 additional with caregiver
Fees will not be prorated.
In Loving Memory of Betty Berger

by Madeleine Isenberg

Our writing class has lost one of its distinguished and beloved writers. We fondly remember Betty Berger (born Beatriz Ana Fraenkel, on February 22, 1941, in Buenos Aires, Argentina). Those of us who attend the Creative Writing Class regularly have learned to recognize our classmates’ writing style and content. Betty, chicly dressed, with coiffed blond hair, and black-framed glasses, never disappointed. Whether it was a poem, a personal travelogue, or a new episode in her series of mysteries solved by nuns in a convent, her work was always enjoyable and beautifully written. How a “nice Jewish girl” could write so knowledgably about nuns was something of a mystery in itself. Betty passed away on October 2, 2018, and was laid to rest in Mt. Sinai Cemetery in the Hollywood Hills, where she joined two classmates, Bernie Koire and Ron Abrams, who died this past year. We hope they are writing beautiful and inspiring stories in the next world. We miss all of them.
Sestina

Tess loved quilting with the elderly women and hearing their tales of life and love. She tried imagining these ladies in their youth wondering if they had loved to dance, and if they’d had multiple husbands or only one. She learned a lot last week and was back for more.

Had they gotten married but yearned for more? Tess wondered about life 60 years ago for women. Did they feel they had lots of choices or just one? Had they ever chosen practicality over love? If so, had life been a dreary trek or more of a dance as they aged out of youth.

Had any of them felt they had wasted their youth by living frivolously and failing to plan more? Tess had chosen nursing over a career in dance since nursing was a realistic choice for women. Dancing would always be her first love but she knew it wasn’t the most practical one.

Tess now listened to Mae, the oldest-looking one yet still had the glimmer of youth in her eyes as she talked about love. She’d had three husbands and would’ve liked more. Back then she admitted it was unusual for women, but at least she always had an escort to a dance.

A potential husband number four didn’t dance so Mae knew he just couldn’t be the one. Thus she released him back to non-dancing women because to her dancing was not limited to youth. He could’ve stayed a chum yet he’d wanted more. But a man who didn’t dance, she couldn’t love.

They all chuckled at the woman’s tale of love probably remembering when they used to dance. They continued quilting and waiting to hear more but Tess saw the clock on the wall now said one. Too bad she had to go because they enjoyed her youth as much as she liked being with these women.

The elderly women added wisdom to her youth as they spoke of love, life and more. But to dance with three husbands? Just give her one.

Winter - I Love You Not

I know you are a part of the cycle but you should be given a bridle you like to sneak up you ooze in and out Leaving samples of your cold fingers dangling from patio eaves a beautiful white blanket covering the ground does not fool me or change my mind cause beneath it a mess is ready to be found

So hurry, be gone, let summer draw near I’ll be waiting around ‘til you are not here you may judge me too harshly yet I’m honest with you I love all the seasons but I don’t particularly like you.

— Catherine Cummings

Bright and Blue

Day dawns bight and blue and beautiful With windswept clouds Reminds me of small ships Bobbing on the windswept bay Like toys on seas of whipped cream foam Remind me of the past Yet here I will stay I will not roam From the place I now call home I’ve found my place in the sun Bright and beautiful

— Corinne Chakarian
Italian Breakfast
by Andrew Roascio

On my recent trip to Italy, I made a startling discovery when my son, David, and I arrived in Milano and checked into a very nice hotel that is within walking distance of the activity center of town. The hotel provided a complete American breakfast accompanied by some Italian favorites. There was no need to search for a restaurant to have breakfast. After three days in Milano, we went to Genoa. There again, the hotel provided a great breakfast. After trying most of the large variety of food, we went off to explore the town.

Then came Torino. That hotel did not provide breakfast. No matter. We’re in the center of town; we’ll just find a restaurant. So off we went in search of breakfast. We passed many food bars where we could have ordered a cappuccino with a ham sandwich or a cornetto (a sweet, Italian crescent injected with either cream or almond paste), then eat standing up at the counter or sit at a table out on the sidewalk, but I wanted to have a real breakfast. We had yet to find an open sit-down restaurant. After about a one-mile walk, we came to a visitor’s information center. We wanted to get information about visiting the Savoy Palace, so we entered.

Before we asked about the palace, I asked, “Is there a restaurant in Torino that serves breakfast?”

Without a moment’s hesitation, the answer came. “No.” The nice young lady behind the desk who spoke English well explained, “Italians don’t eat breakfast.”

Shooting

Shooting! Mass murdering!
When? Where?
Anytime, anywhere,
every time, everywhere,
On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday,
at schools and colleges,
at universities and campuses,
at restaurants and grocery stores
On Friday, Saturday and Sunday,
at mosques, synagogues and churches,
everywhere...

Human morality,
human values,
human dignity,
where are you?
Where have you gone?
Far far away,
way too far,
out of reach...

Oh Lord!
Please intervene,
please let us
find those moral values
established long long ago.
Humankind needs
more kindness and compassion,
more order and stability,
more respect for human lives
more love, love and love,
no more hatred,
no more homicide,
no more atrocity,
no more, no more...

— Sara Levian
Retirement

“So, are you going to travel?”
Repeatedly asked by people
Who hear that you are retiring.
Why is this question so prevalent?
Don’t people who work travel?

No, I don’t plan to travel,
I prefer the comfort of home.
What will you do? Volunteer?
Maybe, although I’m not inclined to.
Do I have to decide to do anything?
May I simply wake each day
And think, what would I like to do today?

Why are people so concerned
About the lives of others?
Are they offering something?
New ideas? Friendship?
That is not my experience
I would categorize the questions
As idle curiosity or conversation fillers.

I would recommend saying
“I cannot imagine what it will be like for you
To have time to yourself,” and wish them
Great personal fulfillment as they launch
Into this new chapter of their lives.

— Sylvia Fogelman

A Free Verse Sonnet

Prologue from Tak:
Sonnets are my favorite form of poetry. Iambic pentameter and rhyming are challenges, which make me reluctant to write one. When I do, the results tend to be engineered. My free verse sonnet allows more direct expression of ideas.

As the fires still rage in the far west
Those affected pray for early winter rain
But Mother Nature adheres to her schedule
For the calendar says when winter starts

Early rains may help control those fires
But too much rain to follow has its effects
The dry barren soil can absorb only so much
Soon, a part of which will move as mud slides

Are there solutions to these annual disasters
Destroying multiple homes and properties
Can the hi-tech magic mitigate their effects
Will the results justify their unknown costs

The melting icebergs of the Antarctica tells us
“Stop meddling in Mother Nature’s plans for us.”

— Tak Nakae
World Pangolin Day, 2019  
by Ilse Nusbaum

Did you know there’s an animal called a pangolin? I didn’t until the day before yesterday, when I bumped into World Pangolin Day on my holiday calendar. The holiday is celebrated on the third Saturday of February, and this year’s celebration is only the eighth. These unusual creatures that look like reptiles aren’t unknown or mysterious. In fact, they’re endangered because people hunt them.

There are more living species of pangolins (eight) than there are living species of humans (which is easy, since we’re alone). Some species of pangolins live in burrows, while others prefer hollow trees. Insectivores that live on termites and ants, they use their sharp claws to dig into ant and termite mounds. Their tongues are extremely long, slender, and sticky, helping them poke out their prey.

Pangolins are mammals, warm-blooded animals that give birth to live young and nurse them. Their scales are made of keratin, the same protein as our hair and fingernails. Those sharp scales and claws are useful weapons for fighting predators, and they also work as camouflage that lets them resemble pine cones when they curl up and hide. They are as cuddly as porcupines and as stinky as skunks.

Pangolins are solitary creatures who meet only to mate. Pangolin mothers care for their babies inside the burrows or hollows for about a month. At about three months of age, the babies are gradually weaned and begin to eat insects. At two, they’re independent and sexually mature.

Pangolins are hunted in many parts of Africa, southern China, and Vietnam, where they are culinary delicacies and a source of traditional medicinal remedies; therefore, humans are the greatest threat to their survival. In November 2010, pangolins were added to a list of endangered mammals. All eight species of pangolin are classified as threatened with extinction, while two are additionally classified as critically endangered.

Recently, researchers have been able to improve artificial pangolin habitats to allow for their reproduction, providing some hope for future reintroduction of these species into their natural habitats. The aim of World Pangolin Day is to increase awareness of these small mammals, to ensure their survival.
Aspen 1967

During a trip to Aspen in the late-sixties
the restaurants and coffee houses
had velvety soft couches to recline on
And fabric napkins in creative patterns
An idea I stole the minute I got home
Oblivious that they needed to be scrubbed daily
While living on a boat with no washing machine

But I digress – reluctant to return to a time of sub-zero weather
The snowy slopes were foreign to me – Siberia-esque
Traversing effortlessly from the mountain tops
Descending with only inches to never fall
An inspiration and deterrent

To save face, at the loss of dignity from my adventurous husband
I ventured out from the comfort of creamy hot chocolate
Lounging beside the Chalet fireplace
For a one hour group lesson in skiing
Resulting in apprehensively
Grabbing onto the rope tow at the bottom of the hill
Being pulled along the bumpy snow higher and higher up the mountain
Anxious to let go and break away
But not knowing how, repeating ‘oh my god’ ad nauseum
The stranger behind me graciously offered his hand at a landing
I clumsily untangled my overlapping skis
Then zigzagged my way from side to side on the slopes
Indirectly toward a lake at the bottom of the ‘bunny hill’
Which I had never noticed
Until several feet away
When an illusion of myself appeared
Which in reality was a guy who had just skidded
Directly into the freezing water
Suffering not only from shock and embarrassment,
But satiric comments:
“Great day for a swim”
‘Hope you’re wearing your long johns’
It so easily could have been me

— Judi Donin

The Upper Berth
by Gary Youngman

As a seven year old in 1947, I traveled cross-country with my family from Brooklyn, New York to Los Angeles, California, by train. My parents, who were very trepidatious at the time about flying, always took my sister, seven years my senior, and me on the red-nosed Santa Fe Super Chief to the west coast. Porters, or Red Caps, as they were called at the time, loaded our luggage and led us down the aisle of the sleeper cars to our compartment.

I was hypnotized watching things fly by outside the windows, as the train sped on its way. It was also always quite fearful for me when the big engines were changed at Chicago, and it looked as if we were being left behind.

The best part of the trip, except for the delicious consommé soup served at lunchtime, was at night when I, not my sister, got to sleep in the upper berth, a bed that flipped down and opened above the dining table. It was a world of its own. This sleeping space had a great view of both my parents, and especially my sister, from a high vantage point. I had to find things to throw at her, like my dirty socks or tee shirt.

Best of all was being tucked in by Mom so tightly, I knew I wouldn’t fall out, and to go off to sleep to the clickety-clack sounds of the wheels on the tracks as we sped toward California.
Sonnet of Life

by Madeleine Isenberg

The assignment was: Sonnet. What did I know about writing a sonnet? Well, William Shakespeare was known for his sonnets written with the English sonnet form. They were to be fourteen lines in length, with three sets of quatrains, ending with a couplet to summarize what had been written before. Each line should have iambic pentameter (i.e., have 10 syllables per line), preferably with the accent on each even syllable.

I set about putting together a sonnet and it was painful exercise. What should my subject be? How to create the appropriate structure for it? I was more of a math person and English classes were always a strain on me. This assignment wasn’t a math problem, but it certainly had numerical constraints to structure it while at the same time, it had to be creative. I struggled for hours and put together this sonnet:

LIFE

The majestic Winter twilights display
Snow-capped mountains and silvery-decked trees.
All the glories of the peaceful scene say,
“We cannot stay long, for we are like peace.”

Spring and Summer bring the colorful hues.
The trees and flowers from buds do blossom.
They are decked in coats of greens, reds and blues.
And one’s heart is stirr’d within one’s bosom.

Autumn spreads the scene with death and much haze.
The leaves have turn’d colors and dropped to earth.
Bare trees, cold, and mist are caught in one’s gaze,
Knowing after this, there will be a rebirth.

Nature’s Cycle - mysterious but so true,
Is to man’s destiny a small, simple clue.

What are your reactions to this? No, don’t tell me yet. Let me first add some background to how this sonnet came to be. It isn’t something I wrote recently, or even a year ago. This is an old homework assignment I had kept among some of my life’s treasures. And why this in particular? Well, I always had to struggle in English class with writing something that would appeal to an English teacher’s concepts of style. But with this typed poem on lined, three-holed punched notebook paper, I received a coveted A grade from Miss Van den Aker’s B-11 American Literature class at Fairfax High. For me this was huge. As the teacher, she had the right to comment on it with “Rhythm a bit rough” and red arrows pointing to the words blossom and bosom and questioning if they rhymed properly, with “poetic license?” But I was content to accept her critique. We never questioned the teacher’s authority. Here is a scan of the actual assignment to prove my words. You can see by the date, December 18, 1958, that I wrote this 60 years ago. What hubris: what did I even know of life at that age? I cannot remember why we had an assignment to write a sonnet on the English form when this was an American Literature class.

On the top line I typed “Sonnet #1.” The effort in creating this piece was so stressful, I never attempted to write another sonnet, even in a non-traditional form. I have tried other poetic forms, including free verse, limericks, a single nineteen-line villanelle, and even created my own “Minimalist Poetry” style. But I doubt there will ever be a Sonnet #2.

Now, feel free to comment as you like.
Ready or Not
by Marsha Miller

I’ve always been athletic. On dry land. But set me down on that cold white stuff in the mountains, and … well, I just don’t get it. Why would anyone want to be in a place that is cold, wet, and slippery? And then to attempt to get around on a couple of boards? Not my idea of fun.

I’ve always been competitive. On dry land. Tell me there’s a grade riding on something, and I’m up for it. No matter the subject. Why? Because I wanted to. Needed to.

Back home in Southern California, out of a literally clear blue sky, my husband suggested that we take a trip to Mammoth. I was quick to point out that it was winter and that there was snow in the mountains and so why leave the comfort of home to go be cold. His answer was that it’d be fun to take the kids skiing. Pretending to be a good sport, I agreed to go.

Once there, my husband said that perhaps I’d like to take a skiing lesson. “Oh, come on, Jerry,” I said. “We can’t afford a private ski lesson.”

“No, not private,” he countered. “It’d be a class. Everyone would be a beginner just like you. You’d be good at it.”

I quickly sized up the instructor and the other students and agreed to take the class. I liked the instructor because he kept singling me out to demonstrate what we had just been taught. I showed the class the proper way to push off, the proper way to stop, and the proper way to fall. All of this, of course, was on the bunny slope. I enjoyed watching our handsome instructor wrap his mouth around the words, “Watch how Marsha does it.”

Once class was over and there would be no more praise, I figured that I had satisfied the basic requirements of this trip – even had my ego massaged along the way -- and that I had, therefore, earned the time to sit quietly in the cozy lodge with a hot chocolate and a good book.

But that was not to be. “Come on, Mom,” three young voices urged, “let’s go on the tow!” Their father seconded that motion. Much against my better judgment, I agreed. The motion carried.

Next thing I knew, I was in line for the ski tow. Although this wasn’t part of my lesson, it looked easy enough. You just make sure the skis are in position and then grasp the rope and let it pull you up.

Problem: I became suddenly paralyzed with fear. I had my hands poised to grasp the rope, but I just couldn’t make them do it. People lined up behind me. “Go ahead!” somebody encouraged. “You can do it.”

To which I answered both to the speaker and to myself, “I’m not ready.”

“Don’t be afraid,” offered another. “It’s real easy.”

“I’m not ready,” I repeated.

“Just close your eyes and grab the rope,” attempted yet another.

“I’m not ready,” I repeated again.

Well, that kind of pep talk went on until the line grew longer and longer and somebody yelled, “Lady, come on; we haven’t got all day.”

And that negative attitude begat another negative attitude until, finally, I heard a deep voice angrily scream, “For Chrissake, just grab the damn thing!”

To this day, I’m not sure of exactly how it happened; maybe I was more fearful of the man’s anger than I was of the rope tow. I grabbed that darned rope, and off I went, shrieking, “But I’m not ready, I’m not ready, I’m not ready!”

Once at the top, I realized that this was no longer the bunny slope, I somehow had to get down this freakin’ Mt. Everest. Maybe what goes up doesn’t really have to come down. I began to wonder how long it would be before the snow melted so that I could walk down. After all, “if winter comes, can spring be far behind?”

But this was no time to contemplate Newton’s physics or Shelley’s poetry. So I did what any bunny slope graduate would do. I removed my skis, leaned back, and slid all the way down the mountain on my rear end. When I reached the bottom, I was greeted by wild applause and cheers from family and strangers. “Thank you,” I said as Jerry pulled me to my feet. “For my next challenge, I am going to conquer bowling on the green.”

And I headed for the lodge.
MAKING A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL

Trying to remember the “embellishments” you’ve told your friends is very challenging, But the exaggerations you tell yourself are far more damaging.

LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY

“You didn’t use Google when you were growing up!” He was in shock! “To all your friends, you must have been the laughing stock.” He just couldn’t conceive the fact that Google didn’t exist back then, Or that I actually communicated with paper (!!!) and pen (!!!)

PIZZA COMING!!!

He came out of the elevator to deliver the largest Pizza anyone has ever sent, “Where you from?” I asked him in awe, but he obviously misconstrued what I meant, Because he replied, “Brazil,” with a prideful smile upon his face, And he bolted down the hall, so I never learned the name of his Pizza place.

THE FASHION FOOL

On Valentine’s Day, I went to a party, wearing a gorgeous jumpsuit in white, I thought my outfit would be a knock out sight, But all the chic ladies wearing black told me I looked a fright, Because in winter, it’s outré to wear anything white. Who knew? I didn’t have a clue.

DO I STAND ALONE?

If it makes you feel superior, I give you permission to call me a “geek,” Because, I proudly admit that I was not one of the 16,600,000 viewers who watched Football last week.

MY EXAMPLE

Whenever I’m not sure what road to take, I think about what my mother would do, And then I do the opposite. I swear that’s true!

LOST WORDS

There is a familiar expression that is now taboo, Because it will brand you as a sexist shrew, However, you can avoid the criticism that “body shaming” brings, If you never utter the words, “It ain’t over till the fat lady sings.”

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

A verbal response is not always required, I have finally conceded, Because in certain cases, a raised eyebrow is all that is needed.

PERFECT PLANTINGS

Earth’s landscape artist was indeed an Ace, Because every tree in the forest grows in a flawless space.

CROWDS ON DEMAND

It’s devastating to learn that some protest marches, are actually staged segments, Performed by Actors who are hired to participate in those rallies and other PR events.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

When an old friend asked me how she looked and sincerely said, “Tell me the truth.” Before I answered, I conjured up the fair and fetching version of her, as she was in her youth. (I don’t mean to create a storm, But the truth is found in many a form.)

JUST WONDERING...

Has anyone ever been showed, That a chicken actually crossed the road?
Good Things Come to Those Who Sweat

by Cynthia Harper

Regular exercise is a major component of overall health and helps us achieve a great mindset to cope with changes in wellness as we age. Exercise helps improve blood pressure, manage blood sugar, improve bone and joint health and preserves neuro-cognitive function. Exercise will help you be the best possible YOU!

Everyone wants to stay healthy, active, and independent as they age, and regular exercise is the key. If you thought getting older should be about relaxing and taking it easy, you are simply misinformed. Exercise is a necessary part of healthy aging and healthy living. You will benefit from just about any type of exercise, especially low-impact exercises with a cardio component coupled with weight bearing movement.

Try these exercises below to keep you fit, flexible and feeling energized.

These exercises will help strengthen your legs which will improve your balance and reduce your risk of falling. Strengthening your legs will also allow you to walk and climb stairs with greater ease and comfort and the dumbbell exercise will improve mobility in your shoulders and elbow joints and allow you to lift heavier objects.

**Step-Ups**
This exercise will strengthen the muscles that support the knee

Begin your step-ups at a staircase with a railing for support. Stand on the bottom step and step-up with your right foot. Bring your left foot up onto the stair, and then bring it back down to the floor, keeping your right foot on the step for the entire time. Do 10 repetitions and then switch feet, doing another ten with the other foot. Repeat this set three times.

**Seated Knee Extensions**
This exercise will strengthen the muscles around the knee and the core muscles

Sit on a chair with your back straight, your bottom all the way back in the chair and knees bent, feet on the floor then slowly extend your right leg out in front of you and hold for a three counts before lowering it back to starting position. Do 8 repetitions then switch to the other leg. For a more advanced version, strap an ankle weight around each ankle. Aim for a weight that is heavy enough to where you cannot do more than 15 repetitions per leg. As you get stronger, you can add more weight to keep it challenging.

**Upright Rows**
This exercise will increase strength in both your back and upper arms, and help improve mobility in your shoulders and elbow joints

Stand with good posture, feet shoulder-width apart, buttocks out and knees slightly bent Hold one dumbbell in each hand in front of your hips, palms facing inward toward your body.

Lift the weights (2-5 pounds) upward, toward your chin. Remember to engage your core, and avoid arching your back or pulling your shoulders up toward your ears. Then return to starting position Repeat 10 times

Remember, you are never too old to start exercising, and strength training in particular becomes more important with age. You can gain significant improvements in strength, range of motion, balance, bone density, and mental clarity whatever age you start. Many of life’s road blocks we place ourselves, and we can remove those roadblocks at any time. See you at the next dance and exercise class!
Can’t Catch Up with U

U r on the go
No stopping u
Never figured u out
Imagine the wheel spinning
My hand
Wants to interrupt
To stop u
No use
On and on
Older, faster
Speeding
On the roll
I see the child standing
Dreaming of the future
Imagining all kinds of
Dreams
Fantasies
Some came to be
Some never did
Hardships, friendships
Happiness, sadness
Loneliness
Tragedies
Childhood
Wifehood
Motherhood
Grandmotherhood…
Cycles
Circles
Faster, faster
Beg of u
Let me breathe
What happened
Where did it go
It disappeared like smoke
Into a tunnel of time
Dreams
Worries
Anticipations
Fights, challenges
Some ended
Some not
Future unknown
The grey hair, wrinkles
Running into childhood friends
The pictures
Then and now
Cycles, circles
Repititions
Birth
The bumpy ride
Death
U never waited for anyone
My best friend
My worst enemy
Time
U beat us all!

— Elizabeth Gohar