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Brooklyn



Botanic garden

JANUARY

Holidays, whether we love them, hate them, celebrate or ignore them

The majority do not particularly enjoy the holidays from Thanksgiving to Hanukkah to Christmas and New Year's, although New Year's was the most popular.

One missed the big family Thanksgivings when she was young, but now it's just her and her son. For New Year's, she has started having a big neighborhood brunch party that is a big hit. Another doesn't celebrate the holidays but did go to Aruba for the New Year.

This was the first Christmas without her husband for one member, but an invitation to be with good friends helped a lot. And every New Year's she has a standing date with four college friends. Another member finds her Christmas is now spent half with one son and his family, and half with the other son and his family in another town and thinks that will be her new holiday pattern.

A dysfunctional family means no wonderful holiday memories for a woman who enjoys biking to the beach instead and may join another TTN group that has a New Year's tea. Similar holiday memories for another who always hated having to help with her mother's parties, and consequently never really liked the holidays. She has given New Year's parties when the fireworks are in the lower harbor, but usually goes to a Broadway show.

One member really dislikes the commercial excess of the season, but her son and his family do the entire Christmas thing. She usually spends New Year's with three friends who go to a movie and dinner together. And, lastly, one member who loves it all, has a large extended family of people she loves. Thanksgiving is with just one cousin's family, another cousin hosts a big Christmas Eve party for 30 or 40 siblings, cousins and assorted other relatives. Then Christmas dinner is with a smaller group. She is lucky and knows it. New Year's she spends quietly at home recovering.

Downtown 3



Union Square Green Market

JANUARY

Cultural Events that members had recently attended.

“1917” - general acclaim;

“Joker” - one person thought it was brilliant;

“Hidden Life” - excellent, a true story;

“The Two Popes” - about humanity, not just about the Catholic church, outstanding performances;

“Bombshell” - excellent;

“Little Women” - too saccharine;

“Knives Out” - thriller, good; one person didn’t like it;

“Wozzeck,” an opera by Schoenberg (HD) - wonderful, modern;

“The Inheritance” - long but excellent (Broadway).

Women We Admire

Nancy Pelosi -- in the forefront of the news, can’t easily be cowed, although not especially articulate, definitely effective;

Barbara Jordan — wanted to be president;

Rebecca Traister -- has written three books;

Alexandria Ocasio Cortez -- well-spoken and effective;

one member chose her daughter —a journalist with a marvelous family;

a member said that teachers were always telling her what to do, one day a teacher asked her what she was reading. She replied, “Hamlet.” She would ask questions about what others were reading, the member was thrilled that someone would want to hear what she had to say, also encouraged the member to write plays;

Mother of four daughters, each very different —good role model, children were encouraged to do whatever interested them, they all pursued very different careers;

Elizabeth Warren - guts to stand up to adversity, she has drive, not part of the elite that was expected to go to college, she struggled.

Lincoln Square



Lincoln Center

DECEMBER

How we celebrate the holiday and memories of holidays past

Some celebrate with families, which can be challenging when family members are geographically spread out and may come from different religious backgrounds. Others have a meal with friends, in some cases, the “traditional” Chinese, and a movie. Some prefer a traditional Thanksgiving meal when there is less commercial emphasis and no religious considerations. Responses to the public signs of the December holidays vary – some love seeing the 5th Ave. windows and the Saks 5th Ave. sound and light show, while others want to avoid the press of crowds.

In response to one participant’s discussion of a recent health crisis we also spent some time discussing the issue of **available geriatric medical care**, which seems to be getting more restricted as NYC doctors leave Medicare or limit their Medicare practices.

JANUARY

Friendship at this stage of life

We spoke about some of the difficulties of maintaining friendships – some friends have moved away or died, some are less interested in pursuing friendship with us. Circles of friendship were generally wider when we were younger. We may have to be more forgiving now in accepting each other’s personal traits and not abandoning old friends who may be more difficult to deal with now. We may appreciate old friends more than we did in the past.

TTN and other organizations provide the opportunity to meet people who are potential new friends. However, it takes some effort to turn an encounter into a friendship. There is a give and take in a friendship and just meeting once a month as in a neighborhood group is not enough. Taking an active role with others, e.g., getting on a committee in an organization, can provide the more extensive contact and shared experiences that can lead to a friendship

MurrayHill/KipsBay



Kips Bay towers

OCTOBER

Lessons learned from a recent fall and injury

A member discovered that it's important to:

- a) get a copy of any scans taken at the time they are taken,
- b) keep lists of current medications and prior medical history, including surgeries, on your cell phone,
- c) have an emergency contact in the neighborhood.

The member also mentioned that she found excellent medical information on the Cleveland clinic website and that audio books on a timer were very helpful for dealing with insomnia after the incident.

Meditation

One member began a meditation practice after her husband passed away and still uses the breathing techniques in stressful situations, including when undergoing an MRI. Another member has had a daily meditation practice for 40 years. It was noted that meditation can be useful for insight, facing difficult issues, finding self-compassion, and improving sleep quality. There are many guided meditations on YouTube and on meditation apps such as HeadSpace. One member commented that meditation has become trendy and commercialized and is sometimes over-sold.

The conversation turned to mindfulness and the difference between mindfulness and meditation. The difference seems to be that mindfulness applies to a wide range of activities and doing them with focus. These activities can include exercise, walking, yoga, and eating. One member stated mindfulness is "learning to smell the roses" whatever you are doing.

Finally, a question arose about what we do to reduce stress. The answers included exercise, Pilates, yoga, walking, and prayer. One member has found a white-noise machine helpful for reducing night-time stress and falling asleep

JANUARY

Plans and challenges for the New Year

Some members had decluttering their homes during 2019, and others included decluttering and downsizing as goals for 2020. Several women mentioned volunteering and travel as activities they plan to begin or continue. Exercise and meditation were also discussed, including positive experiences with meditation apps Headspace and Insight Timer. The discussion then turned to sleep issues, including overnight sleep studies and sleep apnea, and then moved on to continuing care retirement communities.

Going forward, the group is considering getting together outside of our monthly meetings to further strengthen our relationships. Ideas included taking advantage of Restaurant Week and attending events such as movies or Broadway theatre.

Upper West Side 1



Fairway Market

JANUARY

Mortality

One member wrote about her struggle with a friend who has no will because he can't address his own mortality. Coincidentally, Jane Brody's column in this week's NY Times, "When Life Throws You Curveballs, Embrace the New Normal" was relevant and well worth discussing.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/20/well/live/when-life-throws-you-curveballs-embrace-the-new-normal.html>

The group spoke about one of our members, who was hospitalized in September. It raised issues of mortality for all of us. There is the gradual loss of "selfness" that can go with aging. There is the need to grieve over this loss of self. We agreed that facing mortality is universal and considered strategies for doing so, while still living well.

One of us compared sex in youth and aging to Beaujolais vs Port: superficial (when young - you drink a lot) vs. depth and savoring (more typical with maturity).

Another thought being engaged and generative is key to living well.

Someone else speculated whether aging includes irritability. Is reactivity the MO to inhabit for the rest of our lives?

Lively discussion followed as members chimed in on this issue. How much are we entitled to our aggravations and complaints? At same time we need to beware of poisoning the well.

Discussion became even more nuanced and considered.

One of us suggested that being able to share involves being able to take that first step of asking for help ourselves. She reminded us how she had enlisted walking companions when she'd had her hip surgery and let us know how difficult that was. Probably, we hadn't realized that, but reflected how everyone appreciated being given a solid task.

How to help and offer support to those of us who need it is crucial. People like to help when they know how.

We decided to set up a schedule to visit our housebound colleague individually and perhaps have the next meeting at her home if she is willing. Another member would be the "shadow" host and do all preparations.

One of us shared feeling depressed about the loss of certain abilities. When she went to Wisconsin to visit her daughter, her granddaughter and great grandchildren, she endured the accident of falling off the treadmill. Everyone empathized, but were also struck by the vigor involved in being on the treadmill in the first place. We know that this member manages to work out daily. She continues her project of researching a famous scholar.

Long Term Health Care insurance was discussed. Whether it is necessary, or not.

Other end of life issues:

Discussion of burial and cremation: one of us stated her desire is for half her ashes to be buried next to her mother's and father's grave - half to be sprinkled on her friend's garden. She would like a memorial gathering with the Faure Requiem. (A live performance would be ideal).

There is a present-day need for re-programming. We walk slower, for instance. "Immune response" is the word in medical schools these days. It refers to the need to address inflammation, which is integral to the body's immune response to challenge.

Time

One of us said that having more control over our own time has been liberating.

Another said time can also reveal our taking longer to get things together. Losing track of time. Too many things on one's plate causes anxiety.

The loss of good handwriting was lamented.

Where did cursive go? If it's not taught and people can't write it, they can't read it.

Recommendations

The Edge of Democracy - Brazilian film on Netflix.

Jane Meyer - book: Dark Money.

We also talked about putting the topic of Technology on the agenda. Comfort level, tips, use of social media et al. Saved for one of our next meetings:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/24/smarter-living/privacy-online-how-to-stop-advertiser-tracking-opt-out.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

Upper West Side 3



West End Avenue

NOVEMBER

How did the years change us from the 1950's to the 1960's to today?

Many of us 'grew up' in the 60's and many of us are in our '60's +

How are we remaining relevant in the youth-driven culture and how relevant do we want to be? Do women have clout because, as a group, they have significant control over how their income is spent or do they not exercise it? What do we think about younger members of TTN who wish to be in groups that reflect their own generation, i.e., peer groups and book groups?

Suggested reading:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/15/books/review/no-stopping-us-now-gail-collins.html>

At the beginning of each meeting one member, in alphabetical order, is asked to speak for 10 minutes about whatever she thinks will help the group get to know her better.

What it means to be “relevant”

It could mean having grown and changed, having children or grand-children who seek one's advice, being self-sufficient, volunteering, growing professionally, overcoming difficult life-changing events, reinventing ourselves. One can find relevance by feeling inwardly satisfied on a personal level or by outwardly making one's voice heard through, maybe, a feisty letter-to-the-editor. But, while we see ourselves as relevant, others may not always perceive us this way.

Several members recalled their activism in the 60's and 70's and wondered whether inter-generational engagement is possible in 2020. Does each generation need to discover for itself what matters (even if issues do not change)? Do we feel we've "been there, done that?" We may want to pass the torch to new generations, but what if they are not interested in receiving it? At a minimum to be relevant to younger generations we need to continue to be socially and politically aware. We need to remember that if we didn't make noise years ago, we wouldn't be where we are today.

We all know women of a certain age who have accomplished a great deal personally and professionally despite challenges. How might we compile and record this information? How do we get the word out?

Note: Staying connected between monthly meetings makes the "caring" part of our "collaborative" group that much stronger. Since the fall, members of UWS3 have met for dinner before attending a talk on art appraisal at the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen, an exhibit at the Bard Graduate Center, and films at the Upper West Side JCC.

JANUARY

Do you have any dreams or passions?

Suggested reading: Forbes article:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.forbes.com/sites/robpascale/2018/08/20/finding-your-passions/amp/>

Our topic began with the question of how to define "passion." We found it more reasonable to discuss what we find enriching, satisfying, challenging, joyful, and purposeful. We also reminded ourselves that it is okay to "do less and enjoy more." Simple actions such as reading a book are as important as grand ones. Staying healthy and active is nothing short of joy. Completing annoying chores is surprisingly satisfying. We may be "passionate" about different things at different times in our lives, but we are always getting to know ourselves better, and there will always be something to capture our interest.

What speaks to us (or we can't let go of)? Painting, sketching people observed on NYC buses and subways (60 notebooks full), signing up for a TV scriptwriting course and

learning animation, volunteering, staying still, whatever strikes our fancy at any given time.

A member graciously organized a follow-up meeting to introduce us to a graphic art app she recently learned to use.

TTN and Caring Collaborative.

One of the topics mentioned was a celebration of the 20th Anniversary of TTN planned for the weekend of June 5th-8th. We hope many TTN'ers from other chapters in the country will be coming to NYC to get together and that the event will be both a social and educational one for how TTN works in different chapters. We also agreed that it was important to get the word out (through a presentation or break-out session) about how the NYC Chapter works, particularly its Caring Collaborative, a significant feature of the chapter

Upper West Side 4



Soldiers and Sailors Monument

NOVEMBER

Grieving, for ourselves, for others, and how do you handle it.

We used an article that we all read. One person said that our society has a hard time dealing with a person who has just lost a loved one. It is important to follow the rituals of funeral, wake or sitting Shiva, memorializing a year later, just so you have closure for yourself and for others. Writing notes, offering personal memories of the deceased, explaining how they were valued are always important. We also talked about when and how do you approach the mourner. "Would you be open to having lunch or coffee some time" is a good way to start. When you meet, just listen. The mourner is the focus of the meeting, not you.

We talked how we dealt with death of parents, death of boyfriend at the age of 15, death of brother by murder at the age of 28, death of spouses, death of a child, miscarriages, the full gamut.

Mortality

Four out of five do not believe in an afterlife. One did.

We talked about the importance of having a will, throwing out old stuff so that our relatives are not burdened by a difficult estate or cleaning out an apartment/home.

We had great stories, all very personal, a quite a few laughs. This was one of our best meetings and really brought us together. After sharing these thoughts, we know we are not alone.

DECEMBER

Holiday dinner rather than a traditional meeting

We introduced a new member to the group and shared what was going on generally and we discussed some current and past medical issues. One member was leaving for Africa the next day, which led others to reminisce about their Africa adventures as well as other trips. Then we went around the table and each shared one of our favorite holiday memories.

JANUARY

Patience

Are you a patient person in general, what types of things/people make you lose your patience, have you always been patient/impatient, etc.? Some members of the group thought they were very patient while others were at the other end of the spectrum being less patient as they got older. In order to look for solutions, we discussed what strategies we have used or can use to effectively cope with those circumstances that ordinarily make us "lose it" and allow us to keep our composure, such as creating boundaries with people who try our patience. Several caregivers for family members with serious illnesses have to cope with the daily pressures that entails and asked the group for suggestions on how not to lose one's patience in the situation.

One person suggested that, when she was in a similar situation, she tried to focus on feeling gratitude for the love of a spouse and the memories she had when the person was healthy. Others suggested meditation and breathing exercises as well as getting part time help to be able to take time for herself to relieve the stress.

Upper West Side Afternoon



Museum of Natural History

JANUARY

Food and Nutrition

Do you eat differently now than when you were younger?

- Everyone reported that she grew up eating meat, potatoes, and (overcooked) vegetables for nearly every dinner as a child. Our mothers made similar meals even though they had different religious and ethnic traditions. We all wanted to drink soda, and eat wonder bread, hot dogs, and packaged cookies then, not the old family recipes. We spent a good part of the discussion reminiscing about our favorite childhood foods and holiday meals- it's a great way to get to know fellow group members.
- As young adults most of us ate less meat, more salads and fresh fruit, and worried about our weight.
- Today, we are less likely to eat meals at a set time and may eat dinner while watching TV or reading.
- We don't necessarily cook a meal but try to buy healthy prepared foods to microwave or have a salad.

How Do Your Eating Habits Affect Your Health and Wellness? What would you like to change?

- Several of us are trying to eat less salt, fat, and processed food in order to manage high cholesterol, hypertension or pre-diabetes.
- We may feel twinges of guilt when eating salty chips or a rich dessert.

Any food stores with healthy selections you would recommend?

- Citarella was uniformly agreed to have the best fish and prepared dishes.
- Trader Joe's is good for many packaged and frozen items, not fresh fruits. The Columbus Avenue store is less crowded than 72nd & Broadway.
- Whole Foods has better fruits and vegetables.
- Fairway's quality has gone down and prices are higher, but they are still a resource if you need to pick up food in a hurry.
- The Greenmarkets on Friday at West 97th Street and Sunday by Natural History have great seasonal fruits, vegetables, and a variety of other foods.

Any nutrition newsletters or web sites you would recommend?

- <https://www.nutritionaction.com/info/healthletter/>
A highly regarded nonprofit publication, written by food scientists and registered dietitians. Sign up on their website for free nutrition-focused e-mails. The Nutrition Action Healthletter is a subscription publication, available at public libraries.
- https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/harvard_womens_health_watch
Harvard Women's Health Watch, another subscription newsletter available at libraries, also has reliable nutrition-focused articles.

Queens



The Unisphere

JANUARY

Pet Peeves or What Gets Your Goat

To start the New Year off our presenter decided to deal with the things that get under our skin. Whether it be a sound, a social quirk, a voice, or something totally unique to the individual.

So why do we have pet peeves? Studies were done, and it was determined that the part of the brain where our emotions and aggressions are processed became active when exposed to certain sounds, actions or if they were reminded of something vulgar or foul. It is believed that humans create pet peeves from experience or exposure to negative things or things we dislike.

Depending upon how each person perceives the negative thing, determines how strong their pet peeve is. So, what annoys one person might not do the same for another.

We went around the room telling each other our pet peeves. While some were the same for almost all (honking horns, people not paying attention when they walk, being kept on hold during customer service calls) others were unique to the individual (people who are impatient when someone uses coins to pay at the register, getting served birthday cake after someone has just blown out the candles).

Pet peeves are only bad if we let them get the better of us. We need to identify them and make every attempt to minimize our reaction. For example, if service is poor in a restaurant, leave a low tip or speak to the manager. If the crazy drivers on the road make you want to scream, put on some calming music. These are certainly more constructive ways of dealing with our frustration.