

**New York—Dinner with De Niro
and Other Adventures in
the Greatest City in the World
Spring 2017**



September 15, 1954—the day after my eighth birthday—Marilyn shot this famous scene for *The Seven year Itch* at Lexington and 52nd. Husband Joe DiMaggio, a dry olive tree up his ass, was so choked he gave her a black eye that night and they split soon after.



The site today. A few minor changes.



A stroll away is Sparks Steak House where John Gotti had Paul Castellano whacked December 2, 1985.



Still a spiffy steak joint. They start at \$46.



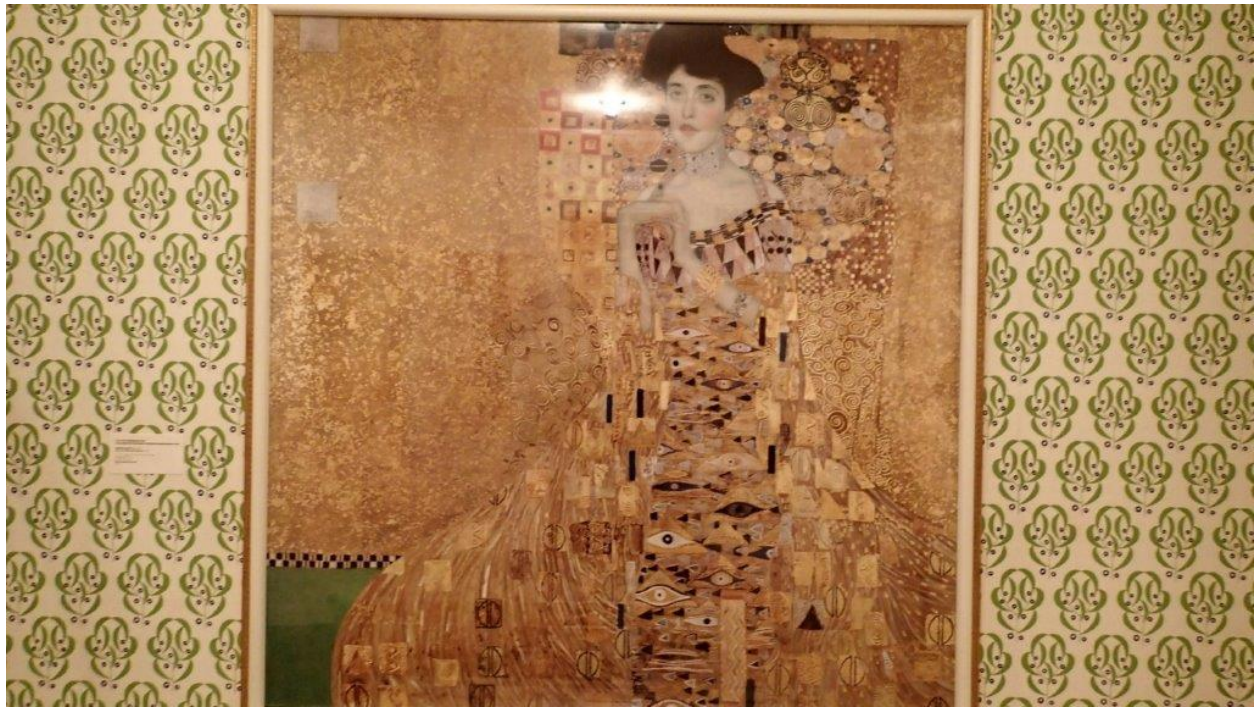
Continuing our Mafia Grand Tour is the Park Sheraton, now the Park Central, where Murder Inc's Albert Anastasia got clipped Oct. 25, 1957.



It's just a block down from our boutique hotel on W56. The barber shop is now this Starbucks.



Down 56th two blocks more to Fifth Avenue and we arrive at the home of another infamous sociopath.



Up Fifth Ave is Gustav Klimt's incredible *Woman in Gold* which we had to see after viewing the movie of the same name. It's the remarkable story of its restoration to the rightful owner after being stolen by the Nazi. Goering once possessed the necklace.



It's at the Neue Gallery on this corner overlooking Central Park. Paul McCartney lives in the two-level penthouse in the glassed building next door.



Paul slapped down 15.5M for it in 2015. Pocket change for the good man, and he's obviously pleased with the purchase, penthouses not coming up often on the Park. Good for him. Here's a guy completely at home with wealth and fame. And deserving of both. Go Paul.

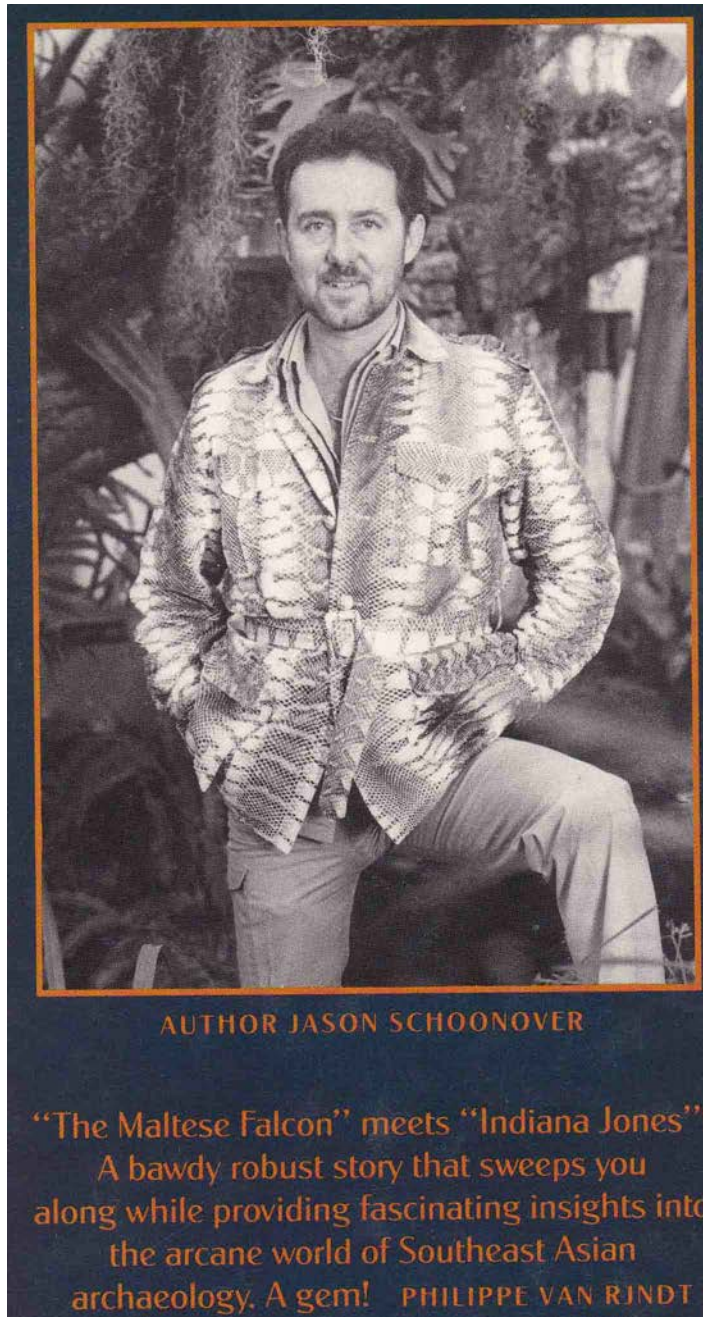


Down Fifth in the other direction, at 42nd, is the library.

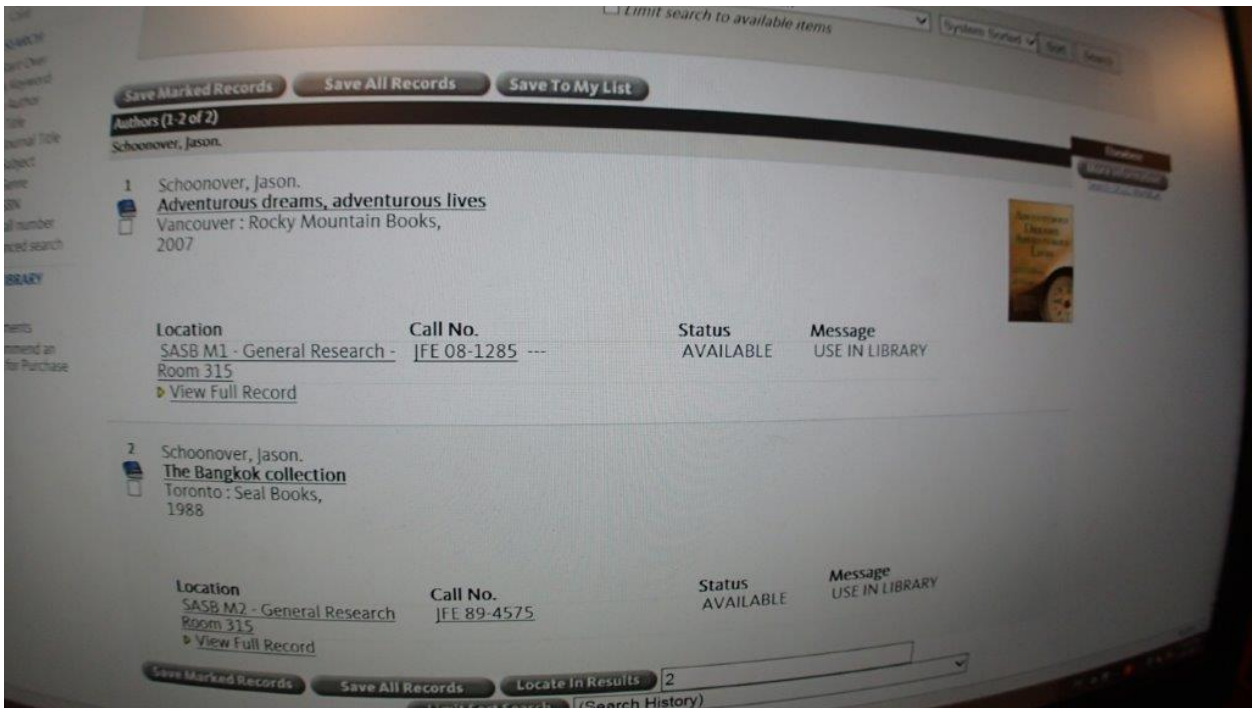


In 1987 Bantam's president, Linda Gray, flew me to New York for lunch with her and the editor-in-chief. As I walked through the revolving doors of the Bantam Building I was startled to

pass Jackie Onassis speeding out. The next morning while I stood waiting for the library doors to open who strolls up to wait with me? Jackie. About where Su is standing. And I was standing where I'm shooting this pic.



I was wearing my cobra skin jacket and she eyed it with admiration. I could see she was hot for me, but I wasn't into older women so I fended off her attention as politely as possible. She was taller than I expected, about 5'7" and slender and elegantly, if simply, dressed. When the doors opened, she shot inside. I think hurt at my rejection.



Making my day was to see that two of my books are ensconced there.

ADVENTUROUS DREAMS, ADVENTUROUS LIVES

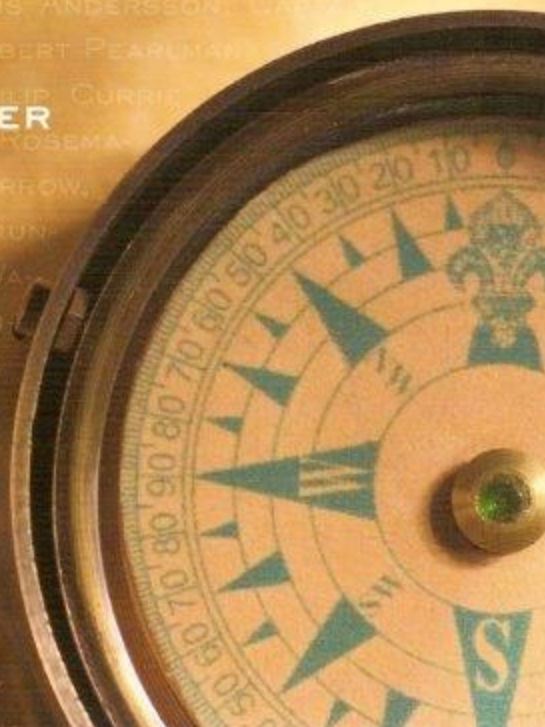
Collected and Edited by

JASON SCHOONOVER

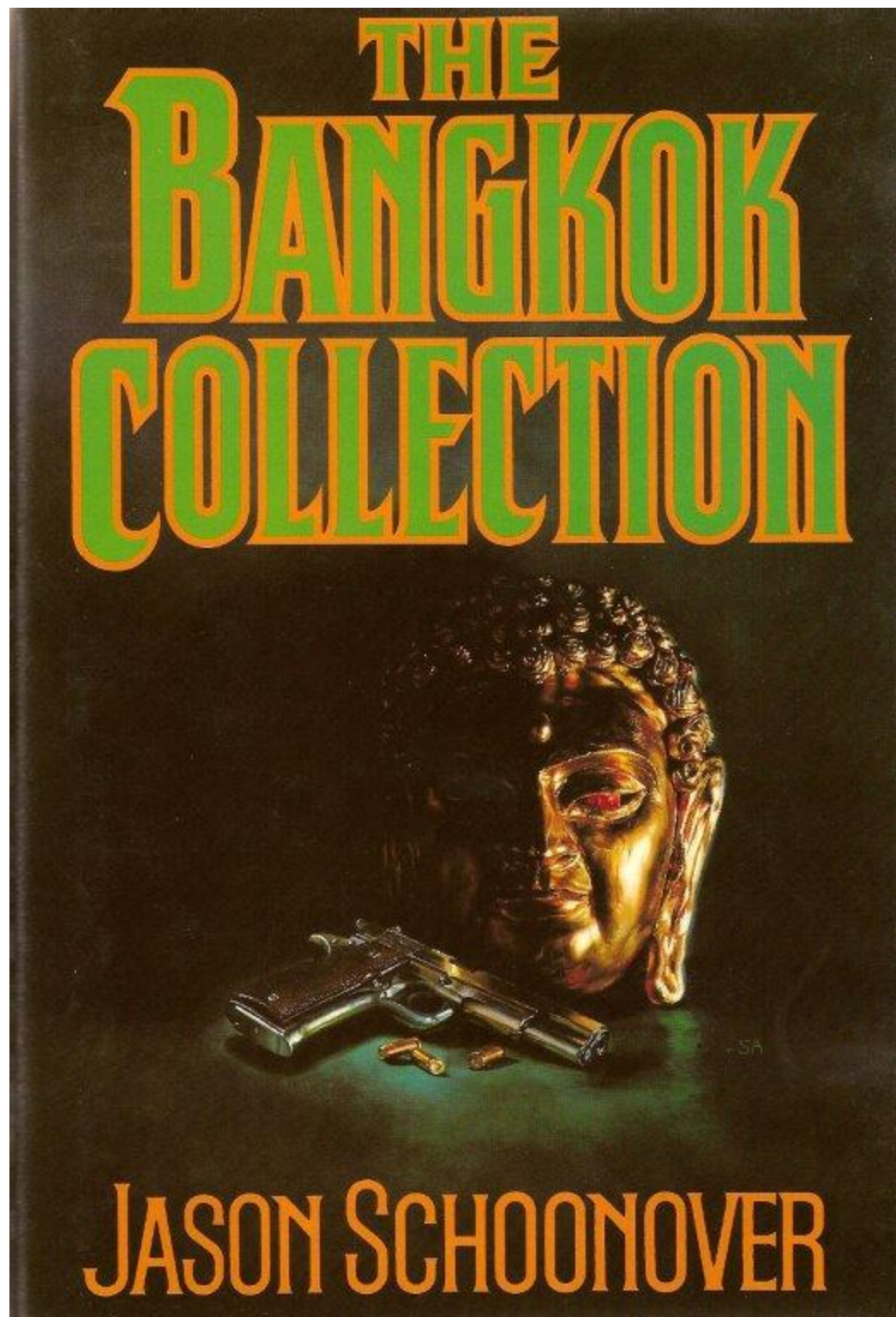
Foreword by

MEAVE LEAKEY

I had no idea when I had my first youthful dream of flight that it would take me all the way to the moon—but that's the power unleashed in following one's dreams. Jason Schoonover's book should be required reading in every school. —BUZZ ALDRIN



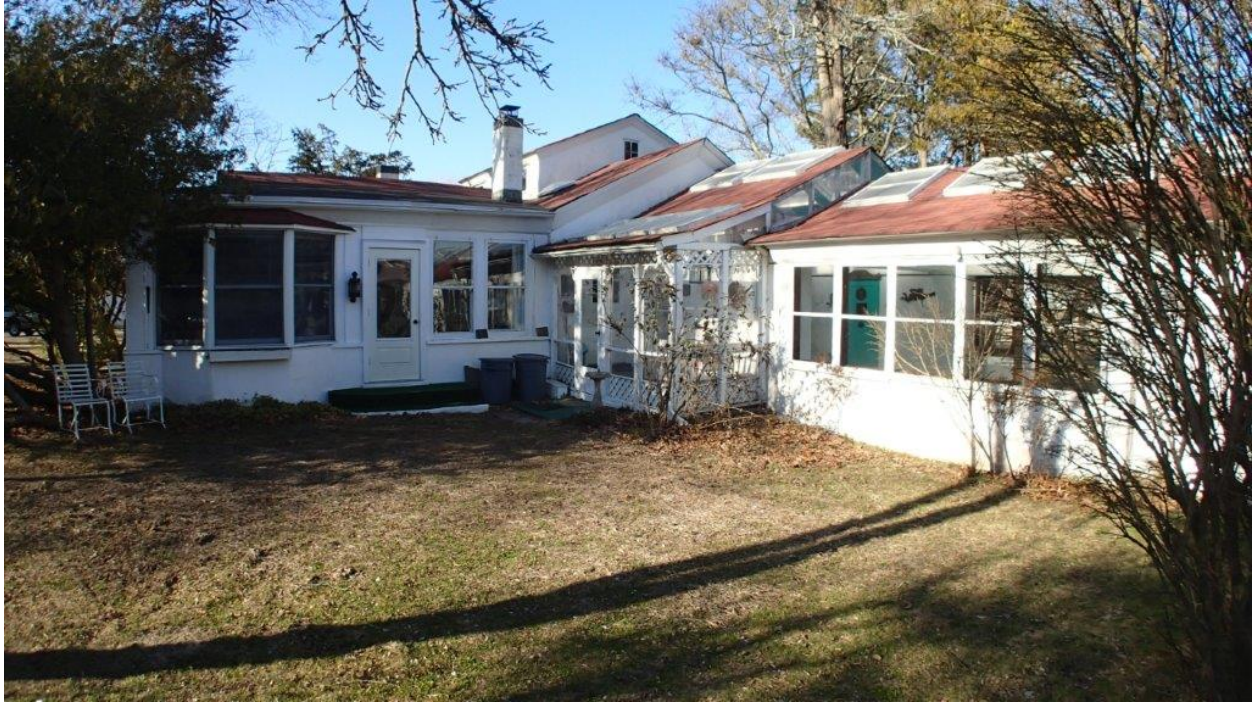
My agent suggests I segue Blah Blah into a book. What do you think? I'd want to expand its range, geographic and otherwise, but I like the idea. I have fun doing this. It's my creative outlet.



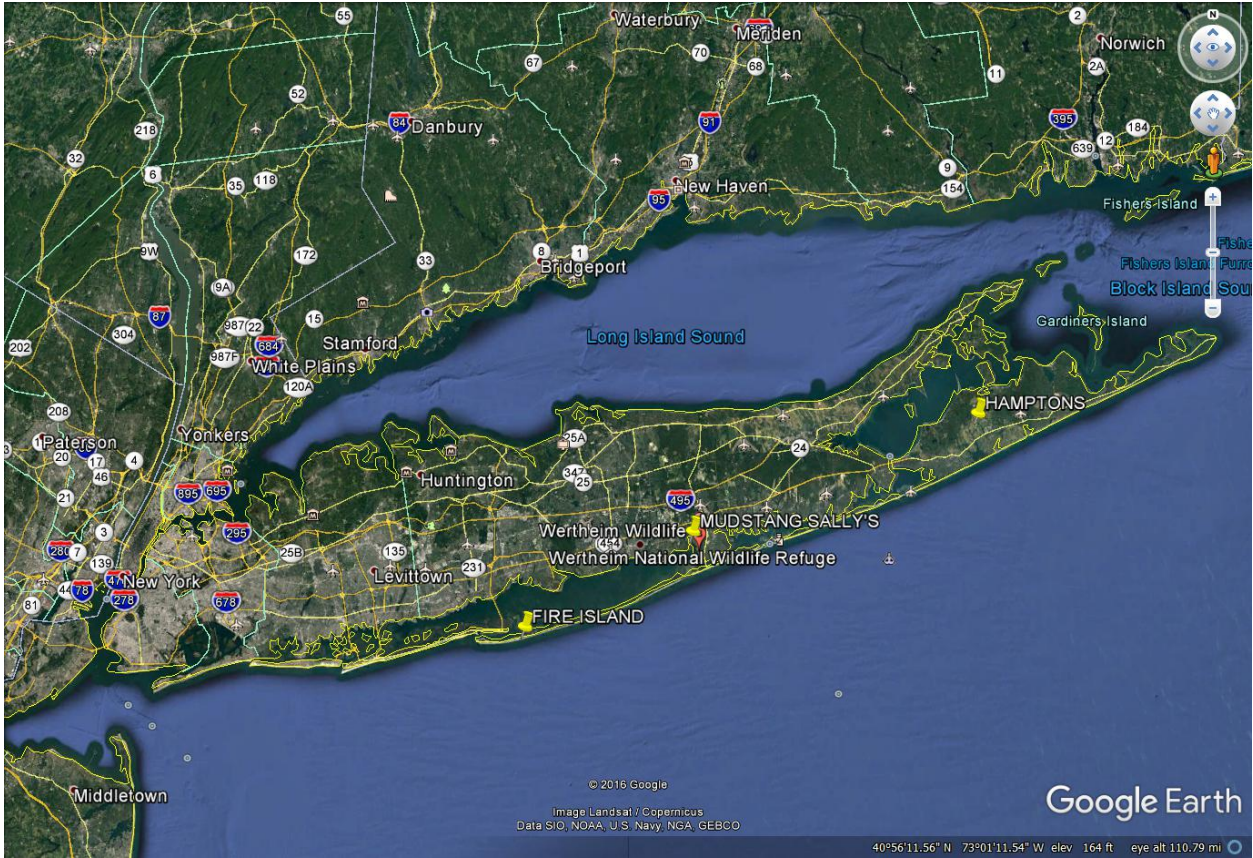
This one segued into two editions of *Thai Gold*, and *Nepal Gold*. It's still selling in India and Nepal and on my Amazon site <https://www.amazon.com/Jason-Schoonover/e/B005PO6CKI> for Kindle. The two range from \$3.99-\$5.99, the latter price because of the 121 pictures in *Dreams*.



Wandering around the East Village we stumbled on McNally's on Prince Street. I had the pleasure of giving a reading here in 2007 for *Adventurous Dreams*, *Adventurous Lives*. Several of the 120 contributors were in attendance. High times.



But our trip wasn't wholly about Gotham. We had the additional pleasure of taking the train half way up Long Island to Mudstang Sally McIntosh's fabulous, rustic digs.



She comes from the most remarkable family I know. Her grand-dad bought about 100 acres in the early '30s on a salt marsh of what became Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. He bequeathed a chunk of his land to it. The family for generations have been, and are, naturalists.

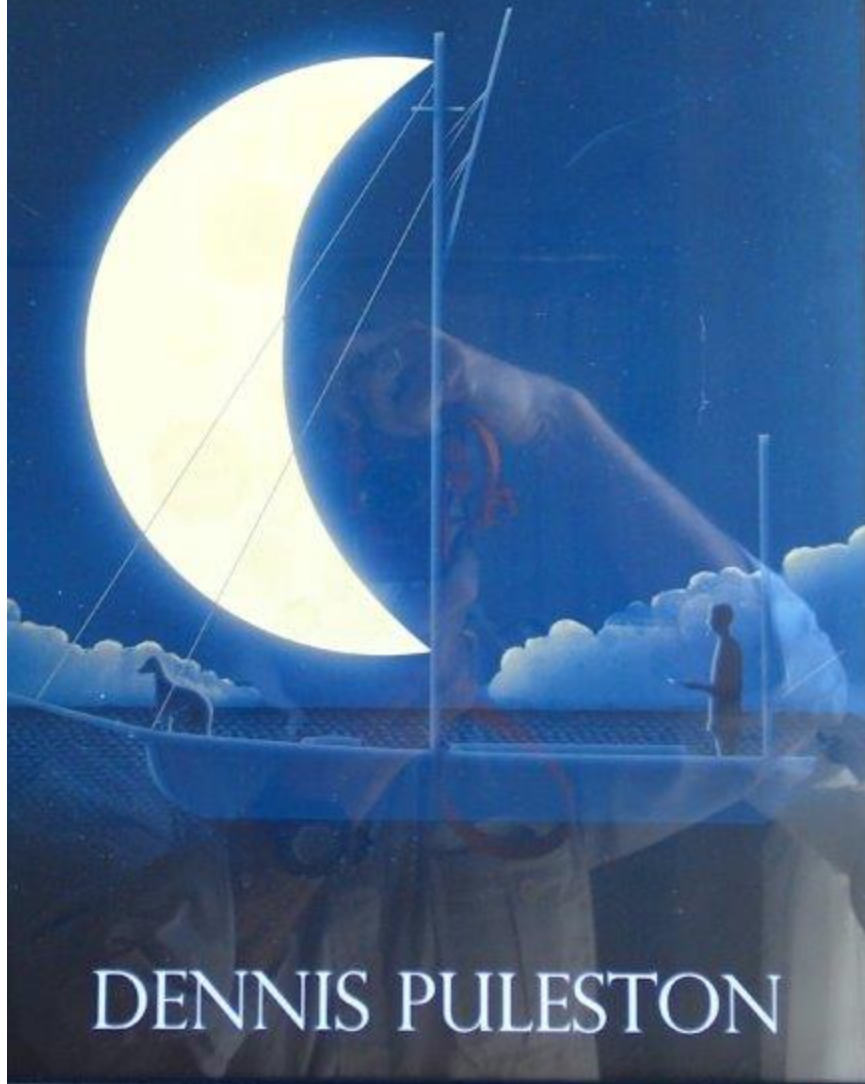


Neighbours and friends are Isabella Rossellini and Glenn Close. They offered to invite Isabella over for coffee but as we were having dinner with Bob De Niro later in the week, that satisfied my celeb fix. I've been in the media since 1970 and meeting famous people is part of the landscape. Mostly, I wouldn't want to be 99% of them. Who would want to lose their anonymity—and freedom—in public?



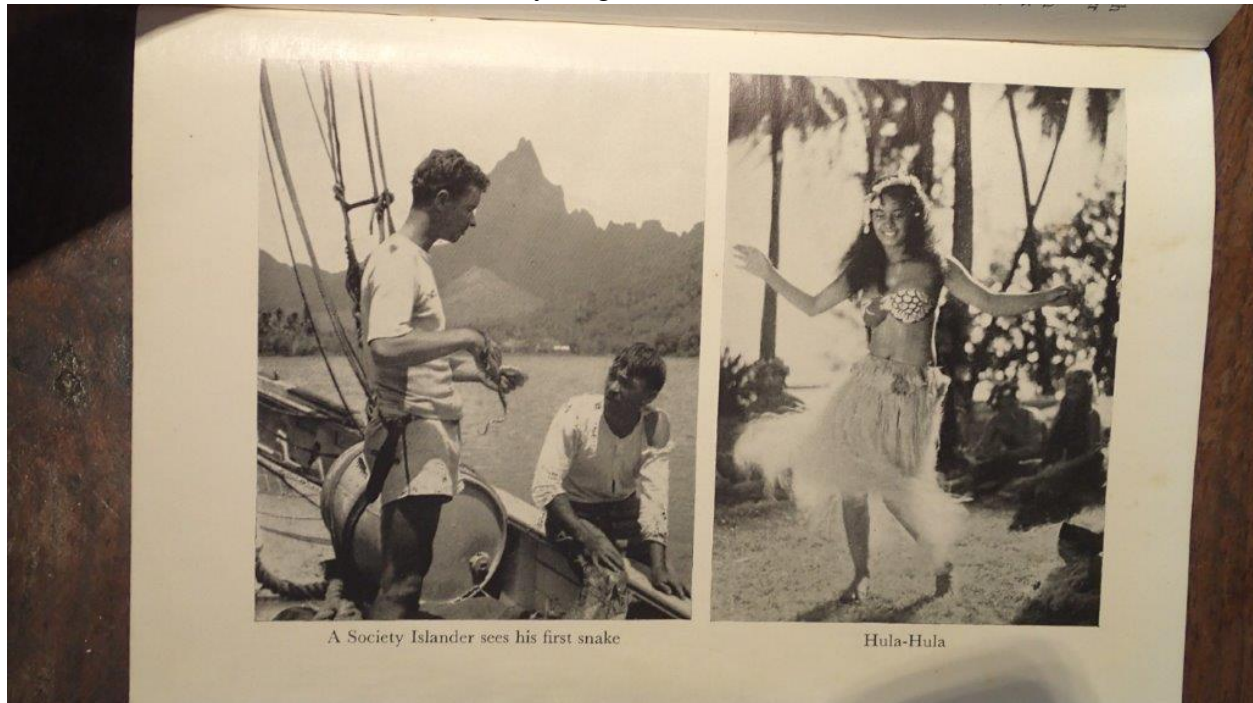
Three descendants have rustic homes here, including Jennifer in the middle. Two generations have worked the Arctic and Antarctic cruise ships, one was an archaeologist (killed by a lightning strike atop Chichen Itza...they don't even die like ordinary people). Sally's son Clem is an actor and appeared, among others, in *Boardwalk Empire*. Two are particularly remarkable.

BLUE WATER VAGABOND



DENNIS PULESTON

One is their dad, Dennis, a Brit who as a young man in 1931-37 sailed around the world.



The story of his adventures were impossible to put down. I devoured his book in a day. Helluva writer. Really knows how to spin metaphors, which separates writers from doodlers with their similes. It and his other books are on

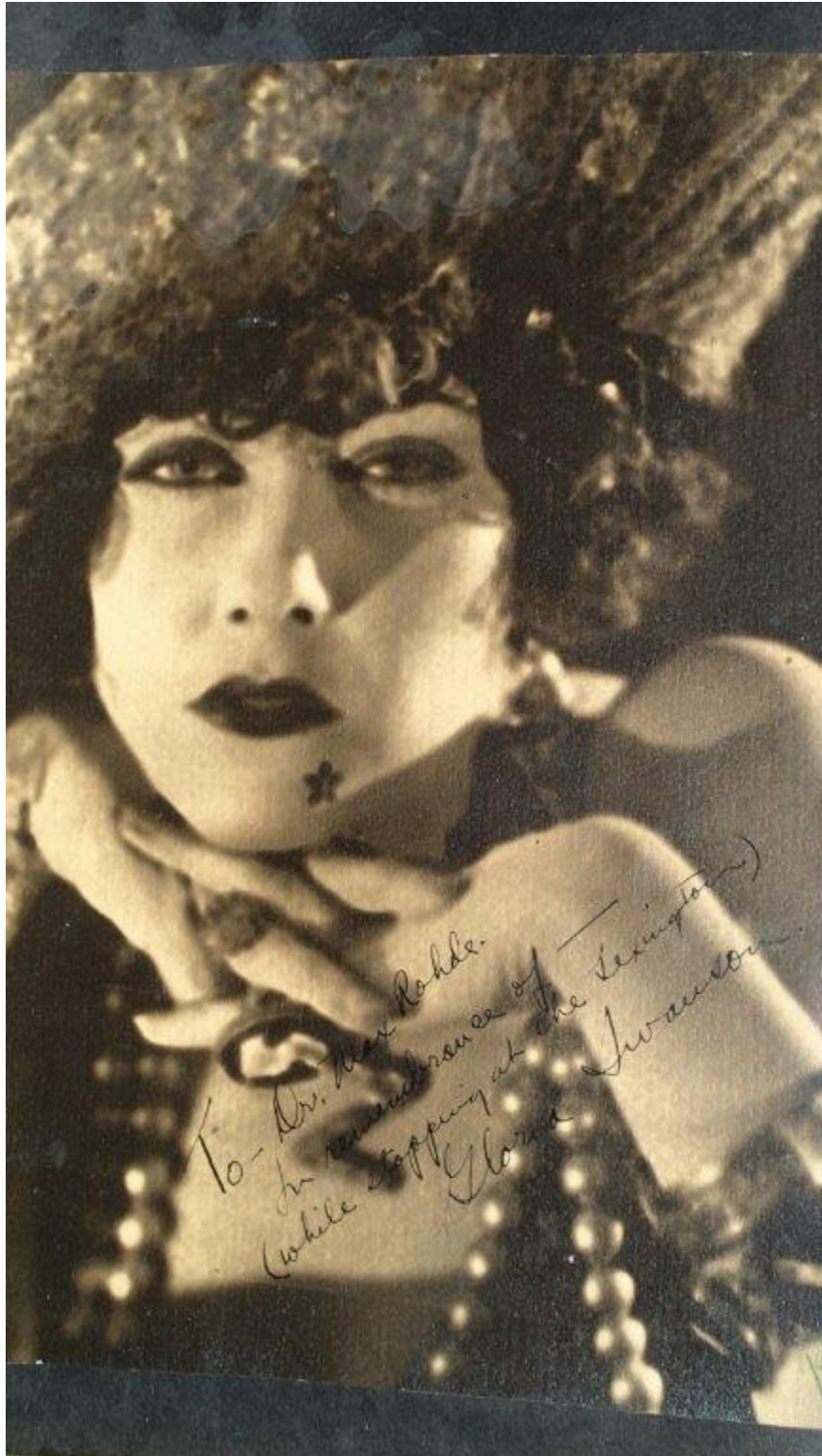
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Emigrating to the US and Long Island he was instrumental in the design, building and crew training of the amphibious landing DUKW. Over 21,000 were made with 5,000-6,000 carrying everything from trucks to troops to supplies in the WW-II Normandy landing. To his surprise, he had the Medal of Freedom, the U.S.'s highest civilian award, pinned on him by Harry Truman.



But MORE fascinating was the unusual practice of Sal's maternal grandad—Dr. Max—who ran a lucrative office on Lexington specializing in women's "complaints." From the expressions you can gather there was a special bond between handsome doctor and patient and one can guess that the complaints were, well, satisfied. When two people look at each other like this you know they've shared intimacies, and are looking forward to mixing more.



He was the doctor to the silent stars, who came to his clinic to be “treated.” Many left very, very warmly autographed photos. Gloria Swanson left four. “...while stopping at the Lexington”)



“To my beloved Max. My love always – and All ways – Judith” All ways...?



“There is no one like him— (p.s. Believe me, I know. Anne)” The highly suggestive notes indicate to me that he was a very talented and much in demand doctor relieving women of what was known as “hysteria.” Vibrators were relatively new on the scene, and doctors in his speciality would have had them. However, Muddy thinks he was just a surgeon specializing in

breast augmentation and the like, and something of a ladies man. “No one wants to think of their grand-dad like that.”



‘To my Doctor “the best” in everything.’ What do you think?



“To my dear Doctor, Your grateful patient.” Gawd, to *me* it reads like he had the *ultimate* dream job! Bringing beautiful women to orgasm—and being *paid* for it! Where do I apply?



Dr. Max spent his declining years in what is now Muddy’s home. He’d sit here in the sun room, his nimble fingers flipping through scrap books, surely with fond, fondling, fondled memories....



But it wasn't all living vicariously and jealously through Dr. Max (the family is exceedingly proud of grand-dad). We were close to the Hamptons and, always curious about this area famous for the ultra rich, Muddy generously cruised us to the end of Long Island.



Fire Island is a loooooong narrow spit of sand running virtually the length on Long Island on the Atlantic side. Honey Bush, The Dragon Lady, Muddy and I enjoyed a four mile walk. It was just off here that Flight 800 mysteriously crashed. The salvage could be seen from shore.



Heading back to Gotham, we caught a privately booked ferry to Ellis Island for The Explorers Club Annual Dinner. I'm sure Yanks (and the Frogs who donated it) are relieved that the Statue of Liberty was set high on a pedestal, where Trump can't reach her pussy.



Johnny-come-latelies landed at Ellis. My Dutch ancestors arrived when New Amsterdam was growing from a hamlet of a few hundred in 1636 and '38, to a town of 1,200 in 1652. I'm the result of 350 years of exploring pioneer stock on this continent.



1,270 explorers from around the world gathered. Sold out. You can see me on the left, middle. I'm the one wearing a tuxedo.



Bob De Niro dined with us. Big plural us. Although not a member, nor an explorer, he shares the Club's values of conservation and spoke with conviction and passion. I gathered he didn't

like the fellow in the White House, whoever that is. He didn't say the guy's name.



Other speakers included *MC WADE DAVIS*, keynote *RAN FIENNES*, the *Trieste's* and Honorary President *DON WALSH*, Explorers Club Medal awardee *BERTRAND PICCARD* and, here, *STRATTON LEOPOLD* and wife Mary, who shared our table along with past Explorers Club Medallist *PHIL CURRIE* and *EVA KOPPELHUS*. *ALL* were contributors to *ADVENTUROUS DREAMS, ADVENTUROUS LIVES*.



Legendary Gene Rurka has been serving up exotic hor d'oeuvres for over 25 years. Cockroaches and tarantulas are being offered, always a fave with this gang. In the top hat is close buddy BJ Mikkelsen, the great Dane, who was with us on a Missouri River adventure. We met in 1984 in New York when he set me up for August to tour and write travel about the Scandahuvian

countries. A great eccentric. We didn't spend enough time together this trip.



Fellow Canuckistanians: Simon Donato of *Boundless*, high spirited both from the recent publication of *The Boundless Life* and his engagement to the lovely Chanelle. And George Kourounis of *Angry Planet*, *The Weather Channel* and a million guest spots. We're both recipients of Stefansson Medals.



My date. The classiest dressed broad there. Just days shy of our 29th anniversary (the month of April) being happily UNmarried. There's a sense of freedom living together. It's natural. And we're naturalists.



The next day everyone converged on the Clubhouse on the Upper East Side.

THE EXPLORERS CLUB

World Center for Exploration

First to the North Pole	1909
First to the South Pole	1911
First to the summit of Mt. Everest	1953
First to the deepest point in the ocean	1960
First to the surface of the Moon	1969

Founded 1904



You don't so much rub shoulders as mash them it's so packed. I always say, it's impossible to have a boring conversation in The Explorers Club.



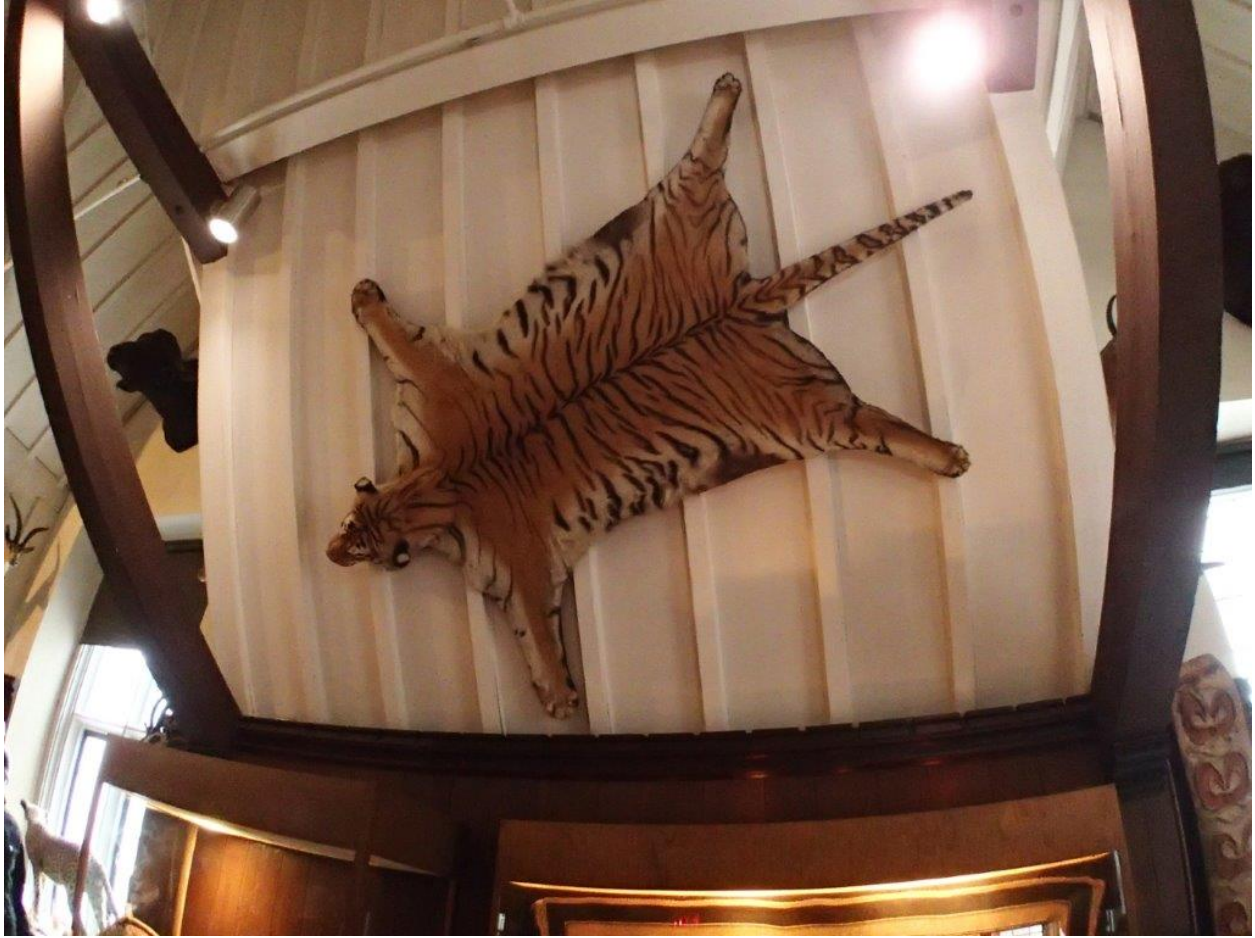
On the terrace with Mudstang (Muddy) Sally, Maddy, Snow Job, Honey Bush, Tree Stomper and The Dragon lady. Dos Equis is a Club sponsor. Good fit. Same with Johnny Walker who distill The Explorers Club series of whiskies, all of which were being served free of course. As they should be since dinner was \$450US. Along with wine and prosecco and a delicious lunch.



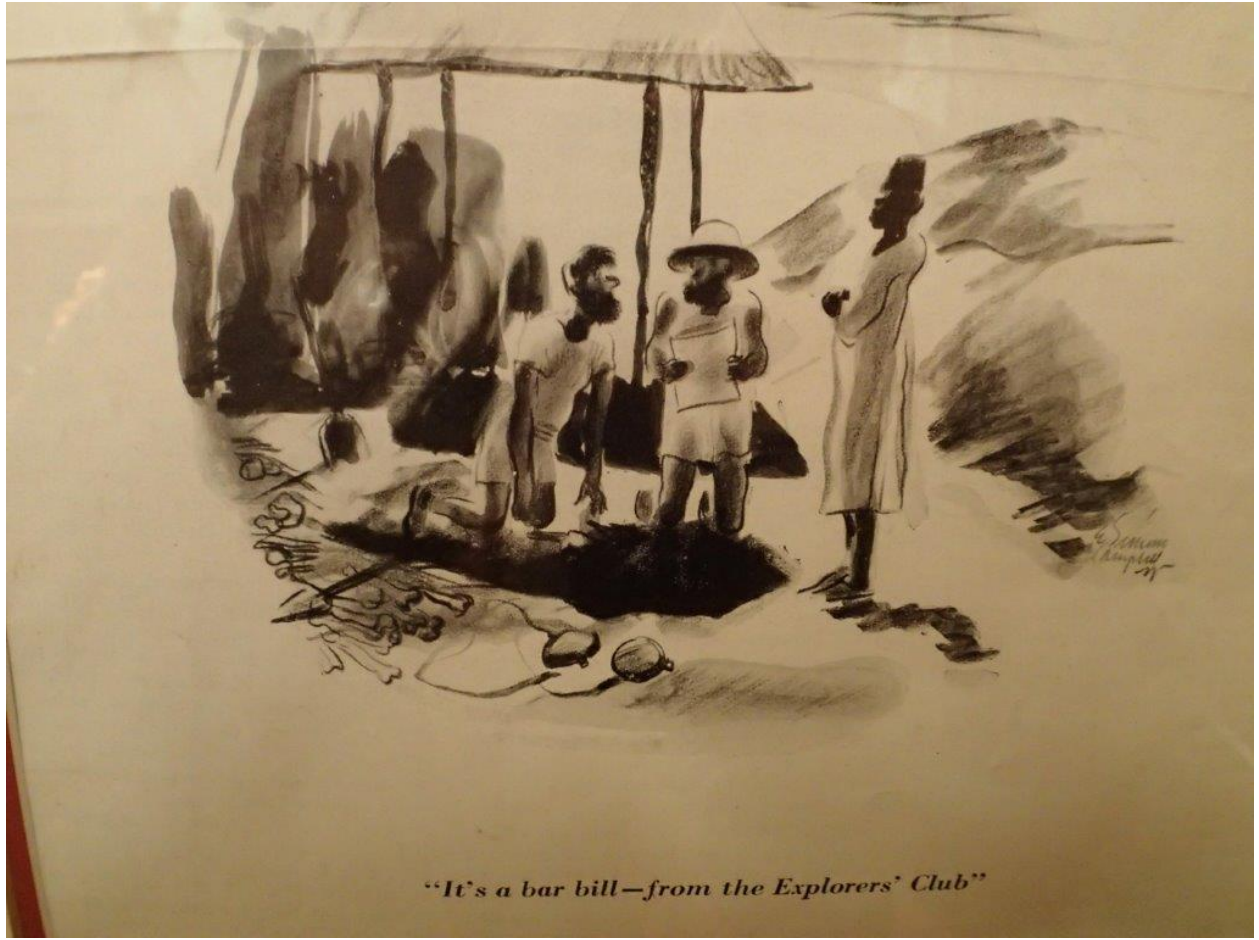
Mary Leopold and The Dragon Lady are such suckers. I told them it's good luck to rub the whale's dick in The Trophy Room and they both ran right over. Actually, they were just happy to be given an excuse.



Phil Currie and Eva Koppelhus discuss with Su our upcoming June excavation of the ceratopsian Wayne Sawchuk discovered on last summer's Red Deer River Explorers Club Flag expedition.



This tiger was no pussy. It had killed and eaten 48 Nepalese before he found himself nailed to our ceiling.



“It’s a bar bill—from the Explorers’ Club”



Frank Sinatra's favorite Italian joint since the 1940s and also ours.



Still a star fave.



Stratton produces \$100,000,000 blockbusters like *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, *Mission Impossible III* and *The Sum of All Fears* so feels right at home. So does Anastasia White and husband Matt Munn, set designers (she an industry award winner) on *Mr. Robot*.



Love this simple but classy joint. The food is incredible. The meatballs are light as ping pong balls. Service, excellent.



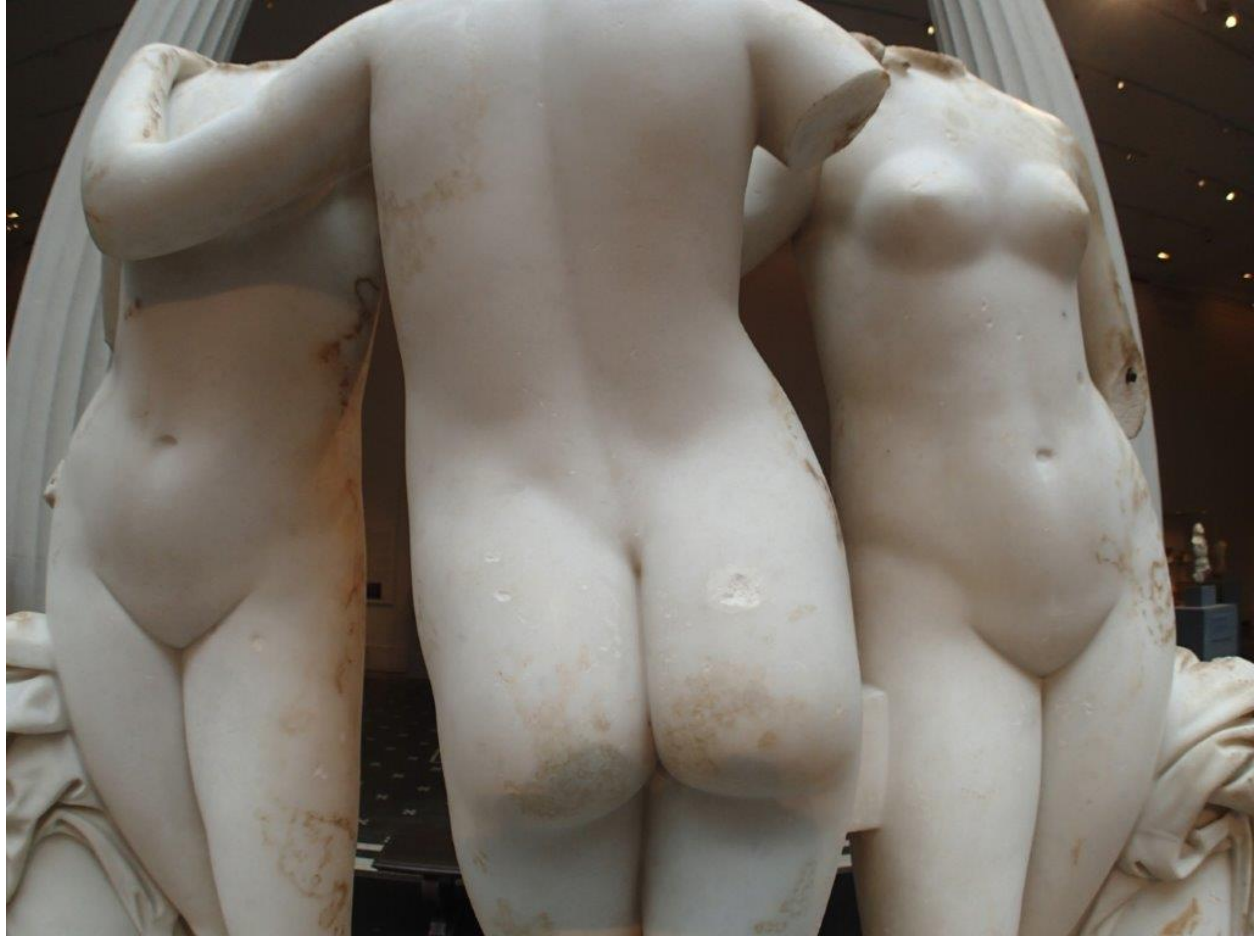
After a day to recover from the incredible high that is this explorers' weekend, we strolled through a greening Central Park, the crocuses spread out in carpets, daffodils peeking up. We passed a jogging Paul Williams, actually more shuffling, he looked so exhausted. New York is that way: I have yet not to see the famous just living their lives. Our destination is a must visit on every trip: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Met.



We were especially interested in seeing the Van Goghs since we could place them in linear perspective after our exploration of his three major painting sites in France. This one was done when he was at the luneybin in St. Remy. See two obvious Blah Blahs at <http://www.jasonschoonover.com/category/blog/2015/>



Here's a church Vincent paint—oh, Jesus, there goes the Olympic Tough. I'd given up on that damned diseased Nikon and sent it to Tony Mayo who said he could fix it with a sledgehammer or something. I hoped it hadn't infected the Oly. Let me try again.



Dammit. Su said, follow me.



But I should have known better. Trust her to lead me to the early Greek porno department of the Met....





I said, enough of this disgusting display. You're Japanese, let's go see Nipponese art. There should just be pictures of waves and bridges and stuff like that, right?



Wrong. Pussy whipped in the Edo Period.



Disgusted, I dragged her out of the Met. The last time we tried the subway two years ago, the two seasoned explorers got so lost we were wary of descending again. But this time we figured it out. Sadly, as the system paints pillars and tiles floors, it's losing its New York gritty subway smell, though the clumsy clatter and bang of the trains is still extant.



Another must visit was to One World Trade Center. You can knock Yanks down, but don't expect them to stay down long. It's the tallest building in the Western Hem. At night, it's incredible. Major classy building.



The Ground Zero Museum is a gorgeous piece of architecture.



After two weeks of iffy weather, spring broke out—and so did the bands, four of them, on Washington Square. Here and in Central Park, you're never far from the sound of a sax, and a sax is at the heart of jazz, as is New York. And we love jazz.



Hungry, we headed for Katz's Deli for a corned beef sandwich.

1989

I'll Have What She's Having

Katz's is the site of Meg Ryan's famous fake orgasm scene in the 1989 romantic comedy "When Harry Met Sally".





The place is a big, beautiful barn. All kinds of comments spring to mind but even I know enough not to put any down on this panel....



If you want to learn what a “fuck frog” is, see *The Book of Mormon*. It really sends up the cult with its bizarre beliefs. Phil and Eva saw it and had a couple of real live Mormons sitting next to them, perhaps sent from Salt Lake to report back. They said they didn’t know which was more entertaining—the stage show or the mortified reactions of the two.



“Sorry,” she in the funny slacks said. No, you gave life to the shot. Thanks. Every trip to New York we seek out another of the old bars. McSorley’s claims to be the oldest continuously operated bar in the contiguous USA. It could be as it well would have been protected by

Tammany Hall from raids during Prohibition. It opened in 1854.



What a joint, even sawdust on the floor. Great brown beer. That's Su at the bar getting pissed and picking fights with other Irish.



Do I look like I feel at home? You betcha. I'm even a quarter Irish. This is now my favorite bar table in the world. And since I'm going to sit here until closing time when they'll have to throw me out, I know you'll get bored so I'll let you go. See you next on Alberta's Red Deer River when we dig that dino out. Really lookin' forward to that.... Ciao.

