

Amaryllis

Summer, 2023

Amaryllis, a newsletter for the Chelsea community, was conceived, and has been researched and written by Jane Hogg since 1996.

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## TRENTLYON

Late September, word was that the ribbon for the Trentlyon Walk was to be cut today, 23rd Street and 11th Avenue near noon.

By the time I got there a few had already arrived. A handful of familiar faces. Definitely no crowd of onlookers.

Minutes later, some large black vans with cameras atop pulled up curbside. Something was soon to happen.

Trentlyon lived in Chelsea, but still, that's merely a dot in Manhattan. Who was he? Here... the hard facts.

Robert Trentlyon, just called Bob, was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1929. His father was a lawyer. His mother, a suffragette... and a violinist.

A Yale graduate, he briefly attended nearby Berkeley, planning to get a Master's degree. While there, he chaired the Students for Democratic Action.

Also met Betty, a member of the group, and eventually married her.

Moved south to New York City, where he worked as a stockbroker. (His daughter said it was a job he hated.)

Back then, Democratic machine politics ruled. Mulling over drinks one night, **Bob and three other committed politicians decided to do it!**

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Called the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club, it became the launching pad for a succession of leading progressive politicians, including Dick Gottfried, Tom Duane, Chris Quinn and Corey Johnson.


In 1965, having scrounged up sufficient cash, Bob bought the Chelsea News. **Now Chelsea blazed forth.**

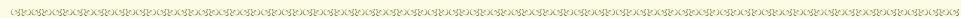
Determined describes him well. He wanted all the waterfront reclaimed for public use.

Just look at the Chelsea Waterside Park now. See green lawns, a children’s carousel and a skateboard park.

Chelsea Recreation Center, deteriorating and empty for dozens of years. Nowadays it offers everything. The multi-storied slit of a building has a full-size swimming pool adjacent to showers and lockers, a basketball court, ping pong and pool tables, all manner of exercise equipment, and numerous rooms with easily sliding walls that can be used for teaching classes, dancing or events not yet imagined.

Solid construction guarantees in the years to come, tech equipment not yet invented, will be integrated in wondrous ways.

A man who made a difference. A heroic building for the ages. 




## REAL RADIO

Weekday mornings 7:00 to 9:00, and weekends 8:00 to 10:00, I always listen to NPR on its FM station. No question about it. I’m a creature of habit.

But I’ve listened long enough to have figured out some new facts. There’s not enough new news to fill in that much space. Instead, you’ll have lots of non-news, such as the weather report. Opening spot each hour? Not today. Chances are you’ll hear it repeated five or six times. Gig Alerts is a new one.

I think it’s when you hear a few minutes of music, and after that, if you want to hear it for real, they’ll be playing at such-and-such bar and grill in east-who-knows or go to newsounds.com for additional information.

And my own final BTW: Everything you heard during the first hour will be pretty much be repeated in the second. Blends in well with my usual a.m. multi-tasking. 





## CAPITOL ONE BANK

Capitol One Bank used to be plunk in the middle of 23rd on the south side of the street, which made life easy for me and saved me the stamp on its return envelope. Just walked in, paid my monthly bill, and got a receipt. Then one day, the branch disappeared—so much for convenience...

Months later, I lost my credit card. Calls back and forth. A new card with a new number had to be issued. They checked latest transactions, all made by me, covered my monthly bill, paid in full, and cleared my bank. No additional charges were made. No further concerns.

They emailed a link so I could print out what they requested, but since my printer was broken,

They emailed a link so I could print out what they requested, but since my printer was broken, that wasn't possible. So, I faxed what they required from a nearby office. Later, I phoned to see how many days before my new card would arrive.

New request—now they want me to enlarge the document and lighten it. More phone calls. In desperation, I snail-mailed the papers by certified mail. That took four days to arrive in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Capitol One said they'd mail the new card to me immediately. Since I'd been without my card for five weeks, I made it clear—I live in an apartment building. My lobby mailbox is the traditional six inches wide, five inches high, and nearly fourteen inches deep. I was planning to be away for a few days, so the letter had to be placed inside the mailbox. No problem. And because I was a valued customer, it would be there within five to six business days.

"Six days? Couldn't it be quicker?" I asked.

The clerk put me on hold to speak to his supervisor. Came back and said, "For \$16, we can send it sooner."

At this point, I asked to speak to his supervisor. Enraged, I pointed out how long their dithering had left me cardless. Finally, she agreed to send my new card right away with no fee and guaranteed it would be in my mailbox by Monday.


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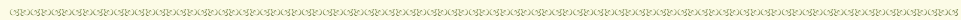




Before saying goodbye, I asked, “What’s your name and ID number?” Wrote it all down.

Came home Monday morning, mailbox was empty, but maybe the mail hadn’t come yet... Rode up to my floor, and there, in front of my door, was a FedEx nine-inch by twelve-inch cardboard container for all to see. Neighbors told me it had been there for several days.

Is that what Capitol One means when it asks, “What’s in your wallet?” 



## PRICES


**D**id it often just in time for morning coffee; raced across to Ideal for a quart of whole milk. Usually lasts me a week. Know just where it is, right down the first aisle.

Then came the change. My shout, “Where’s the coffee” to the cashier who informed me all the dairy products had been moved to Aisle 9. Furthest away from the front door, I found it on the left end.

What was happening in all the newly arranged other aisles? Total makeover. New items galore. Upscale, all of them. Priced to appeal to the people in the neighborhood? Only if they were wealthy.

Paused to compare some other product prices with Trader Joe’s. Yet tucked away in dairy was a huge surprise. My single item purchase, my quart of whole milk, cost \$2.19. It was the least expensive in all of Chelsea! The manager spotted me leaving. He, by the way, informed me that once they finished their re-shelving, they would be giving Senior Discounts one day a week.

Here are some other contrasts: Least expensive string cheese is \$6.99. TJ is \$3.99. Crunchy peanut butter costs \$6.59, while TJ is \$2.29. Honey, for \$7.99, is a dollar more than TJ. Name brand block of Cream Cheese \$6.19. Exact same one at TJ is \$1.69.

Facing the check-out counter at Ideal is an end block sign announcing Manager’s special. Cheerios for \$7.99. Bluntly named JO’s for a perfect price: \$1.99! 





# TITO

Totally without sight, Tito walks towards me, as was usual, as we're walking in opposite directions.

"Where are you off to?" I asked.

"I'm waiting for my brother."

Odd. I knew there were lots of sibs, some dead, others living far away, but I'd never heard of a visiting brother.

"Where will you be headed?"

"Out to dinner."

Watched from my window. Tito, tall, slender, dressed in one of his usual vanilla-colored zip-front jacket and often nearly the same colored pants, sat on the garden bench.

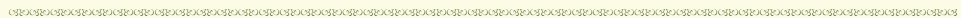
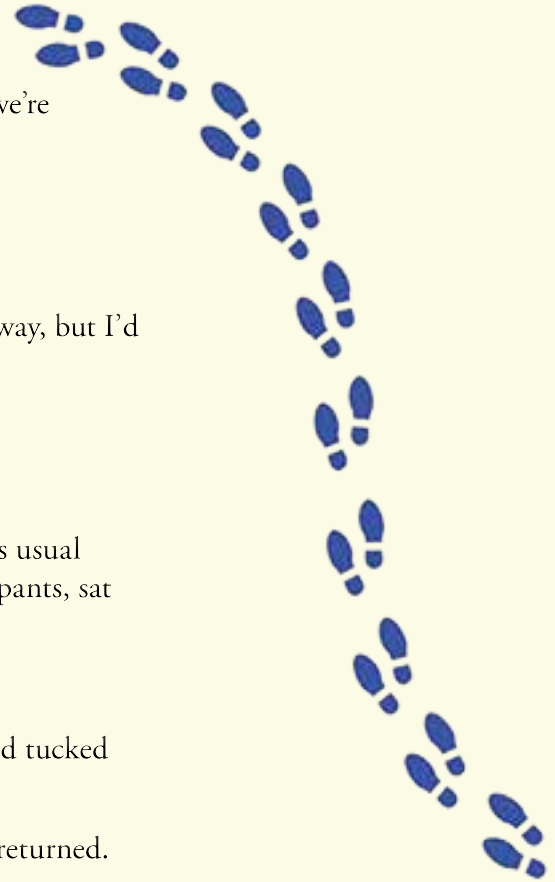
Minutes later, brother arrived. Clearly way younger.

Then, something I'd never seen before, Tito held his cane aside and tucked his arm in his brother's, and away they went.

Wow. Hoped, if I timed it properly, I'd run into them when they returned.

Figured I'd ask where they'd eaten, maybe even get introduced to his brother.

No luck. Hours later, I realized I'd missed them. Too late to phone Tito, but I'd do it tomorrow. ☺



# HOT DOGS AT CHELSEA PAPAYA

Overhead, a variety of pots, cookware, and cooking utensils. Down below, all the boxed items necessary for today's breakfast—fridge for butter, eggs, milk, cream, and franks. Purchases are all carried away. A website provides menu items and prices.

How much is a simple hot dog topped with mustard (plain or spicy), ketchup, or raw onions? \$3.25. One with cooked onions, sauerkraut or chili costs \$4.30. Final option is chili and cheese for \$5.50. A posted phone number allows online ordering for speedy delivery. ☺





## SAVING ISN'T SIMPLE

First of all, simple is never simple. Headed to Best Buy to buy a tiny gadget for my new computer. Helped by the same salesperson who'd helped me years ago. He only worked on weekends. What did he do the rest of the week? Seems he was a student in a nearby community college. From Uruguay, he'd be the first in his family to graduate from a college in this country.

Computers don't come with keyboards. One buys them separately. A hah! My old one was fine. A potential saving. One part I had was called a hub. It plugged into the side of my computer, allowing me to link up to several things; a musical disc player and the printer, for starters. What I needed was an adapter.

Aide went to check it out. None in the store. How do I get one? Have to order it. The cost? About nine dollars. (Why are 4 syllables...nine ninety-nine...easier to say than less than ten?)

How long before it comes? Be here by Friday. Be quicker to pick it up at the store? It can be shipped directly to your home. How much for shipping? No charge for that. FedEx will have it there sometime Friday. Ugh. FedEx just leaves things on the counter in our 21-floor building. Casual theft is a possibility, especially since it's so small.

Sometimes the shipper says signature required, in which case it has to be delivered to the apartment. (Now I'm more confused. Do I just stay home and wait for it or see which one of my neighbors will be home all day and sign for it. (Proof again...simple is never simple.)

Back home, and at least two are guaranteed home-all-dayers. Head back to Best Buy. Look west on 23rd Street and see a bus approaching. No luck. Marked not in service.

Clearly, midday and man in front of a just re-opened Mexican restaurant is holding a tray of tiny drinks. He offers me one. What are they? Frozen margaritas. Does it have liquor in it? Of course! Can't be much so I take it. Smile. It's delicious. Have another one! No thanks. Too busy watching out for motorized scooters weaving down the sidewalk as I retrace my steps to 6th Avenue. ☺☺





## BROKEN BONES

Off to a new doctor... his specialty, fractured bones. Thankfully I'm a neatness freak. Still have X-rays of my 2004 broken kneecap in a file cabinet.

Knew his office was on Madison between 81st and 82nd. Figured I'd take 23rd crosstown bus to Madison and transfer. No big deal. Checked my pockets to make sure I had everything I needed.

Looked out the window to check the weather; decided it must be raining. Reaching for an umbrella, looked again, and it wasn't raining after all.

Weird weather. Almost dark with skies a strange orangey brown color. Learned it was smoke from wildfires to the north of us blowing our way, mixing with our own layer of smog.

Masked up with the suggested KN95 and headed out. Once on the bus, I was surprised to see most others, all ages, were unmasked. So much for health risks... Young people seem to think only older people get sick.

Doctor greeted me. Surprised I didn't have some sort of walking device for balance.

"Don't need one," I explained.

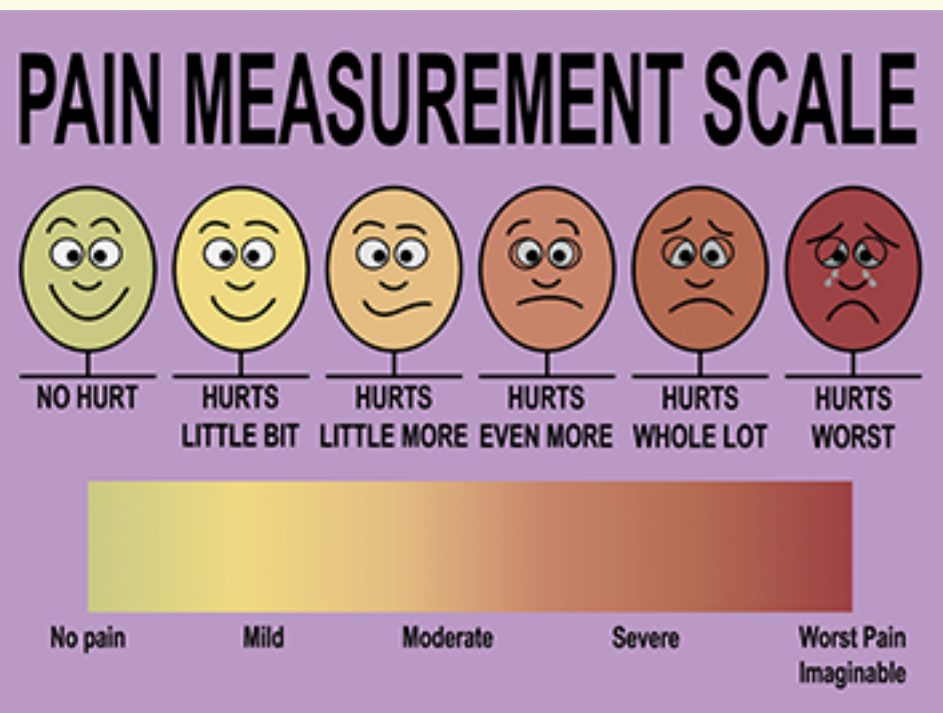
"Well, surely a cane, then? "

"No. Keeping both hands free guarantees my balance. When I stand up, I wait a few seconds just so whatever floats around in my middle ear is stabilized; then I look down to make sure my feet are walking on a safe surface."

Clearly, he was puzzled.

Pointing to a chart on his wall indicating pain levels zero to ten using facial gestures, he asked which represented mine.

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“Zero. I always keep my leg straight. Since my spine is perfectly straight and has been for years, I walk briskly, just in a crooked-looking way. And I always walk next to a flat wall or even one that’s fenced in just to be sure if someone bangs into me, I have something to grasp or at least slide down against. Needing to bend my knee then would be excruciating until I could straighten it out.”

Time for the surgeon to get his own X-rays. His assistant said she’d be glad to take my arm, but I said my usual way would be fine for me, and we’d get there just as fast. Two long corridors, and I could see both watching me all the way.

Numerous shots. The technician lowered the table so I could lay myself down to keep my leg straight. Repositioning was just as painless, and eventually, heading back to the main office was equally so.

Knee brace intact, I walked down the Avenue to 42nd Street, strolling briskly on my good leg.

Fascinating.

Lots of street-level changes. Some shops are gone, and many new ones opened. These seem to be selling high-cost items with well-known labels.

Bussed crosstown to 6th. Used my finally replaced lost MTA card for the first time. Knew it had \$75 on it; bus has slot right next to driver. Just insert, and the machine tells you how much remains. Downtown buses don’t seem to have this. Driver, clearly annoyed, said, “You get tickets on the street.” Then, not wanting to miss the light, he said, “Just sit down so I can keep moving.”

Thanked him as I got off at 6th.

Felt frustration combined with amusement and befuddlement not knowing the ins and outs of a transit system in the city I’ve lived in for most of my life.

Bought a few items at Trader Joe’s and walked home.

Perfect time to practice.

Five short and three long blocks to my front door. The leg brace made me look clumsy, but I knew my knee was stable and secure. ☺







## REFLUX FRIENDLY PILLOW

Christmas Day and Bed Bath & Beyond in Chelsea is wide open for business. Good day to buy myself a Christmas present. Call the store and ask if they have any reflux-friendly pillows. They say they have one and it's white.

Perfect. The store is open until 6:00, and I know I'm sure to be there before 3:00. Bedding is on the lower level. I elevator down. Lots of shoppers pushing carts but zero salespeople. Elevator back up and ask to speak to a manager. Explain my problem. Need a clerk to assist me. Finally, many minutes later, one arrives.

Now we both go back to the lower level. She logs into computer, which tells her the pillow is not on shelves. She searches stock room but it isn't there.

So much for simple. The pillow doesn't seem to be anywhere. Can only be ordered online. And it isn't white, it's gray. Big deal. I sleep with my eyes closed so won't even see it.

Almost an hour at the computer and suddenly it locks and shuts down. Eyes rolling, she logs in again. Decides she wants to give me a \$25 discount because of all the misinformation given to me. Hand her my credit card. What now? Computer locks again.

She calls upstairs and asks any clerk to come down to restart it. That done, I hand her my one-time only 20% discount notice that came via mail. Good until sometime in January. Scans that barcode and tears it up to toss.

Smiling, I head upstairs. Aha! All the toasters are on sale and I need a new one. Clerk asks if he can help me.


"Least expensive one," I answer.

Shows me one with four slices.

"I only want two," I explain.

"We don't have any."

So much for happenings...

My pillow will arrive in three to four working days. Returnable? Of course. Full amount directly to your card. 





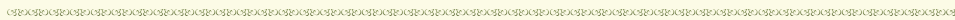
## FRANKFURTERS TODAY



Years ago, when I stopped to browse at the Muhlenberg Library on 23rd Street, my visiting son from Boston would always say, “Great. Take as long as you want. While you do that, I’m going across that street to get a hot dog.”

The library, closed a few years ago for total renovation and to make it code-compliant with current ADA regulations, is scheduled to re-open in late 2023. The face of the building, cited as a historic landmark, has been power washed and scrubbed clean and is now having its window frames and metal trim work painted.

A warm, sunny early Saturday morning made it a perfect time for this Chelsea wanderer to check out the franks. ☺



## MAG & LIDL

Mag & Lidl have just signed a lease for the 23,000-square-foot grocery store at the northwest corner of 26th and 9th Avenue.

Expected to open in early 2026, more than everyday grocery essentials, the Chelsea store will have numerous departments. Meat and seafood sections, a bakery, fresh produce, with more to come.

Lidl workers will have comprehensive benefits, including healthcare for all full and part-time employees regardless of number of hours worked each week. In New York City, they have stores in Staten Island, Harlem, Astoria. Each one is focused on hiring workers from the surrounding communities. ☺

