



The Kimball Farms Observer



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Lunettes! Ooh la la! page 8

May 2021

Turning 100 in the Garden of Eden

Eden Gruenberg is amazed that she's becoming one hundred years old. People in her family did not live unusually long lives, she says, and her older sister, Phyllis, died of cancer at the tragically young age of forty-one. "Maybe it's because I've always been a milk drinker," she speculates. Her vices are few: she gave up smoking during a sabbatical year in Denmark because cigarettes were so expensive. For exercise, Eden walks often on the Kimball Farms perimeter road. She prefers being outdoors, and the countryside is always preferable to cities. She keeps her brain active with reading and Scrabble, at which she is unbeatable, according to her daughter Lisa.

Her gardening career got off to a good start in the first house where she and her husband lived in Ottawa, Canada. The property had been a garden center, so the soil was in good condition and very fertile. "The soil was ready for planting when we moved in, and things grew like mad," Eden said. "After that beginning, I tried to have a garden wherever we lived, mostly flowers, but a few vegetables."

Philosophically, Eden says she relates best to Eeyore, a lumpy, tends often the Winnie A. A. Milne a teacher to class on Eeyore is given to self-deprecating remarks: "It's not much of a tail, but I'm sort of attached to it," or "My eyes are open but my mind is asleep." He appeals to Eden because his gloomy outlook is matched by a sense of humor and



a ready wit, characteristics that Eden insists are paramount for a successful life.

Eden Jane Wayles was born on May 27, 1921, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. She insists that her "name has nothing to do with Adam and Eve" in spite of her enthusiasm for gardening. She was named for the river Eden, which flows north through the city of Carlisle and along the route of Hadrian's Wall into Solway Firth in the north of England, from which her parents emigrated to Canada. Eden says that "wandering feet" was a common characteristic of her ancestors.



Her maternal grandfather, who was a builder, moved his family to Australia, where Eden's mother Anna Louisa (called Louie), the eldest child, was born, then returned to England when Eden's mother was eleven. She graduated from nursing school, and always said she vividly remembered the day her father gave her a "golden guinea" (a British coin issued from 1663 to 1813) to pay for her ship passage from England to Canada. At the same time, a young man named Alfred Wayles, who was a suitor of Louie's was boarding the same ship. According to Eden, "family lore had it that he bribed a steward to put him in the cabin next to Louie's, scandalizing the family."

When the couple reached Canada, in the family tradition of "wandering feet" kept moving west to British Columbia, and set up housekeeping in the city of Victoria, where their first daughter, Phyllis, was born, followed five years later by Eden. One of Eden's most vivid childhood memories was the weather in Vancouver with, it seemed, constant rain and dark days when the family lived in the shadow of the mountains.

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The effect of the weather on Eden was so depressing that the family moved farther west of the city where the weather was sunnier. The family didn't have a car, and Eden remembers being carried on her father's shoulders to the new house near the beach after a trolley ride from the old one. The family later moved again to be closer to her school. Eden and her daughter Lisa were pleased to find both houses were still there when they visited many years later.

Like her mother, Eden went to nursing school after high school, although she was told that she had to "grow up" for a year because she looked (and was, in fact) too young. The minimum age was 19 to begin the three-year program at St. Paul's School of Nursing in Vancouver. The last assignment in the nursing program, and the most difficult in Eden's opinion, was at a psychiatric sanitarium. "This was before there were medications for mental illnesses," Eden recalls, "and the noise and chaos of the ward were appalling."

Eden went home for the Christmas holidays in 1943 to recover from the experience at the sanitarium. Her mother had encouraged her sister Phyllis to ask her fiancé, Mel Julson, to bring his roommate, a fellow engineering student at the University of British Columbia named Harry Gruenberg, home for Christmas, because Harry had no family nearby.

To say that Harry had no family close by was a huge understatement. Harry's large and lively Jewish family could be traced for generations from its roots in what is now Poland, through Germany and eventually to Vienna. After Kristallnacht in November of 1938, the family was scattered and many murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

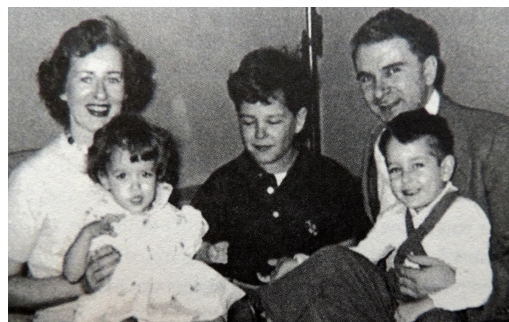
Harry was able to leave Vienna in March of 1939, to go to England, and eventually to Canada. After he retired, Harry did extensive genealogical research, "creating almost a hundred family trees," according to his daughter Lisa. "He had written something about almost everyone, even relatives who died long before the war. ... His lighthearted stories didn't match the carefully rendered trees, so many branches withered with phrases like "gassed at Auschwitz" or "died? Minsk?"

These quotations are from "My City of Dreams", a fascinating memoir written by Lisa Gruenberg in

2019. Her story brings together her father's family story, especially the search for Mia, her father's younger sister who disappeared in the Holocaust at age fifteen, with her own husband and two daughters.

A photograph taken at Christmas 1943 shows two handsome young men, Mel and Harry, flanked by the smiling Wayles sisters. Eden's impression from that meeting was that Harry had "class" and was "remarkably well balanced" in spite of all he had lived through. She added, "Living with me, he became quite silly, and loved Winnie the Pooh, which I read to him. He didn't get a chance not to like the Pooh books. I even took them with me to the hospital when David was born."

Eden and Harry were married on September 3, 1946, in Vancouver. The couple moved to California for three years while Harry earned a PhD in engineering at Cal Tech. First son David was born there in 1949.



Eden and family in 1956

The family returned to Ottawa, Canada, where Harry became a naturalized citizen, and Neville and Lisa were born, but they returned

to the United States in 1956 when Harry joined the engineering faculty at Syracuse University, where he taught until he retired. Eden got a job as a school nurse, and the children thrived. In their sixties, Harry decided they should take up cross-country skiing, since Syracuse was so abundantly supplied with snow, during the long winters. After the children left home, they moved to a condominium.

Sabbatical years and summers provided time for travel, often to Austria to see where Harry grew up, and where Eden loved the beautiful countryside. One sabbatical year in Denmark was especially memorable. Although David was at Cornell, Neville and Lisa went to the American School. As soon as Eden sent them off in the morning, she would take a train from the suburb where they lived into Copenhagen where she walked all over.

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(Eden, continued from page 2)

She took Danish lessons, they made good friends, even though the Danes could be quite formal, and bought a Volvo to travel widely. They especially admired the country's national health program

Sadly, Harry died in August of 2005. Eden moved to Kimball Farms because Lisa was nervous about her living alone. After looking at many retirement communities, Eden chose Kimball Farms because of its country atmosphere and its proximity to Jacob's Pillow and other venues for ballet in the Berkshires. She had often stopped in the Berkshires for dance performances on the drive from Syracuse to Boston to visit David or Lisa.

As her centennial anniversary approaches, Eden says she has no plans for a celebration but "has heard rumblings" from her family that something may be in the works. She hasn't seen her widely scattered grandchildren for some time, and there are great-grands that she's never seen.

Whatever form the celebration takes, congratulations to Eden on achieving a major milestone. To quote that noted philosopher Eeyore, "It never hurts to keep looking for sunshine."

Susan Dana

President's Comments: Things Are Looking Up

A few happy things to report as the small world that is Kimball continues weaving its path through pandemic demands that inch toward the normalcy we crave. We're still masked; social distancing is still required; we definitely do not miss having food delivered to our doors in plastic boxes!

And, just as definitely, we do like having food served to us in the dining room on real plates, with real utensils. And HOT. Service has been tweaked and now consists of two seatings, the first between noon and 2:00 p.m. No reservations are necessary for that unless a table for six or more is wanted. The second seating, beginning at 5:00 p.m., and running at ten-minute intervals until 5:30 p.m., does require you to make a reservation 24 hours in advance. You'll be assigned a specific time to check in to avoid a crowd appearing at the door all at once.

You may notice new faces in the dining room. Among them are three new wait staff, Courtney, Lily and Trinity, as well as 16 "newbies" who moved in during the many months the dining room was closed. When you notice someone you don't know, please extend greetings, introduce yourself, and welcome them to Kimball.

Other restrictions have been loosened: 20 people can now attend movies; residents can (at last!) use machines in the Pine Hill Gym, by reservation only. Our large outdoor picnic tables are now in place. I've even seen a few hardy souls sitting at them, bundled up and not picnicking but looking happy to be outside and together.

Arrangements have been completed to allow residents to enjoy facilities at Wyndhurst (formerly Cranwell); these include golf, swimming and fitness center. Register at our front desk to obtain the necessary card. Please note that the card is only for our residents; no guest(s) may accompany you. And also note that the card does not include golf cart and any other extras you may wish. For those you'll be charged a fee.

Michelle has already lined up four outdoor summer events. Details of time, place and group will be forthcoming. Ozzie's Food Truck is now in Northampton, where it's being spiffed up for its summer runs, which definitely include stops at Kimball.

A cold spring does not deter bears. Please remember to take down your bird feeders lest you attract large visitors. And remember, as well, to protect yourself against small visitors: ticks are out, too, so dress appropriately and stay safe.

I'm told there will be "happy surprises" to report in our next issue. Stay tuned with fingers crossed, masked and socially distanced. Try lifting your spirits by identifying three beautiful things each day; it's not cheating to consistently pick the same three things!

Dorothea Nelson

*John Gillespie's "Library Lines" column
will resume next month*

Look for Nadine Gill on the Walker's Circuit

Enthusiastic, attractive, well-traveled ... all are words that describe, but do not do justice to Nadine Gill, new resident in Stockbridge apartment 222. Born in Paris, that great city was her home until April 1941 when she and her family escaped the horrors of WW II for the safety of the United States.

Her resilient spirit began even earlier in her life when her father died. "After his death, his younger brother Alexander came to Paris to care for the young family," she said. Uncle Alexander took over the successful smelting factory her father had established, but the horrors of the war necessitated their departure from France.

It was a harrowing, circuitous escape route; Nadine, together with her family and cousin, managed to reach Portugal. From there it was a long 16-day journey to the United States. No grand ocean liner for this group; they sailed on a small boat in cramped quarters with few amenities until they reached New York City.

There, thanks to an American family who sponsored them, they settled in a tall apartment building, straddled by an equally tall outside fire escape. That fire escape activated Nadine's fear neuron; she can still recall her terror of that structure all these years later. I bet that most readers can well understand that a little girl of eight, who spoke not a word of English, in a totally strange environment, could be haunted by that sight.

Fortunately, the family soon moved to an apartment at Central Park West and 95th Street. That setting began her love affair with the City. Nadine spoke glowingly about her fascination with all New York offered: museums, theater, music, all mostly within walking distance.

She married writer James Vladimir Gill (now deceased); together they raised three girls and one boy in NYC. As luck would have it, daughter Nina was with Nadine during our interview and I heard her recall the great satisfaction she and her brothers experienced during their early education. All four children attended the Fleming School, a small, private elementary school that taught in both French and English. Nadine, like many other parents, aided in the constant struggle to keep this innovative school financially solvent and flourishing.

All through her busy years as a mother, she pursued an active interest in art. Because she was born with the condition Diplopia or "double vision," reading and classroom learning were a challenge; she is totally self-taught. This condition results in the eye seeing overlapping perceptions of a single image. There can be amusing results, such as when Nadine attempted to pour a glass of milk. Her eyes saw two glasses and, yes, she poured the milk into the false image. Other circumstances were far from amusing, yet her resilient spirit again rose to the challenge; she became an accomplished artist.

She learned by studying the Masters until she had the confidence to produce her own work. Her Facebook page attracted the attention of the SBD Gallery in New York's East Village and Nadine was offered two special shows to display her paintings. Fortunately for Kimball residents, some of her work will be hung in the hallway near her apartment. Fortunately for me, I was able to see those she selected for her own apartment.



There are other treasures in that apartment, many of which came from the days she spent antiquing in the

Berkshires; that is the way she first became an admirer of this area. Among her favorite acquisitions is a wonderful old French kitchen table, legs cut down, that has become a coffee table; two dry sinks she picked up "along the way" add to her apartment's eclectic atmosphere. Not an antique but a piece I especially loved is a chair covered with a colorful papier mâché design that was made by her cousin.

Nadine and her family moved to Switzerland in the 70s but she was happy to return to NYC, where she again had the things she loved at her fingertips.

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Open Mic: Two Years Under the South African Sky

My husband, Henry, and I were graduate students in the Harvard Astronomy Department when our advisor suggested that we go to the Harvard Observatory's Boyden Station in South Africa to obtain data for our Ph.D. dissertations. The station was located some miles outside Bloemfontein, in the province of the Orange Free State. It was a unique opportunity we were eager to accept and financial aid made it possible. Shortly before we were to depart, the then superintendent of the Boyden Station died. A search for a new superintendent was expected to take a couple of months. In the interim Henry was asked to serve as Acting Superintendent – quite a responsibility for a mere graduate student.



Elske beside the big telescope

So instead of living in the visitor's accommodations at the station, we moved into the "Main House." A couple of months after our arrival the search for a new superintendent for the Boyden Station was put on hold. There had been a change of administration at the Observatory in Cambridge, and the new director was actually considering closing the station in a year or two! So would Henry please continue as acting superintendent for the time being. As you can imagine, the word that the station might close was a devastating blow to the staff. In the meantime, Henry and I continued living in style in the main house.

Every clear night would find us at one or other of the telescopes at the station. The largest was a 60-inch reflector. Others were a 24-inch reflector and a 13-inch refractor. It can get cold on the South African Veldt, and working in an open, unheated dome could get quite uncomfortable. We had been advised to take along WWII flying suites: heavy fleece-lined leather suits. Clumsy but welcome protection.

We worked all night, taking a tea break at midnight. Snakes were a hazard; these included cobras and puff adders. I was frankly scared silly of them, and screamed one night when one crossed my path en route for my tea break. Henry thought me ridiculous!

Part way into our sojourn at the station, another American graduate student, from the University of Wisconsin, came to set up and observe with an all-sky telescope. He became a good friend and companion, and three of us spent much time together. On cloudy nights we often played canasta, going outside periodically to see whether the sky had cleared.

South Africa at that time was governed by the Nationalist Party, Afrikaner-dominated and led by Dr. Daniel Malan. The policy of racial segregation known as Apartheid was being implemented. All Africans had to carry a pass signed by a white supervisor. We were advised by our professor to abide by the laws of the country, as we were guests there. Henry had to sign passes for any "natives" (Africans) if they wanted to go into town.

One of the perks of living in the Main House was having an African maid to clean. She would also have cooked for us, but I preferred to cook myself – on a coal-fired stove. The white staff at the station thought that I spoiled her. *(continued on page 6)*

(Nadine Gill, continued from page 4)

She remained there, in an apartment near the Museum of Natural History, until, just as the first Covid lockdown was about to begin, her son Michael, now living in Great Barrington, called to say, "Mom, get ready, it's time for you to move here."

She has high praise for Kimball, its congenial residents and beautiful grounds. Her daily routine includes walking five or six miles, a practice that has her well acquainted with the perimeter road! Already sought out for dinner dates, she praises Chef Mike's cuisine and the "gracious" dining room, and counts herself lucky to be here. I think we are lucky to claim her as one of our own!

Dorothea Nelson

(African Sky, continued from page 5)

Another perk as acting superintendent was the use of a car. Once a week we would drive to Bloemfontein for shopping; mostly for groceries, but also for books for cloudy nights. Whenever we went, I would ask the maid whether there was anything she would like me to get for her. She usually asked for “mieliemeel” (corn meal) and “buttons for the tummy” (Tums).

There were several other observatories in South Africa; the climate was good, with an abundance of clear skies. These were the Cape Observatory in Cape Town, the Union Observatory in Johannesburg, and the University of Oxford’s Radcliffe Observatory in Pretoria. Not only did we visit those, but some of their astronomers visited us. Such visitors were always welcome diversions.

We took advantage of one such observatory visit to Pretoria to continue on to the Kruger Park Game Reserve. At that time visitors could drive their own cars around the reserve. The only stipulation was that we would be in the fence-enclosed visitors’ compounds before sundown, where we stayed in African-style rondavel huts. We had a grand time driving around to look for game, watching them and photographing them. Elephants, lions, baboons, kudu, impala, secretary birds, zebra, and more. Baboons would often climb over cars in the hope of handouts. Lions sometimes walked along the roads because the noise and smell of cars made stalking their prey easier. On one such occasion several cars were lined up watching a pride of lions walk by. A woman in the car ahead of us stuck her arm out of the window to take a reading for her light meter. She retracted it in fright as a lion walked right below her arm.

In due course we had obtained the observational data necessary for our dissertations. A new temporary director was appointed and we returned to Cambridge. Several European observatories stepped in as partners with Harvard in funding and use of the station. Eventually, in 1976, it was transferred to the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein.

Elske Smith

After the Lockdown Year, An Antidote to Lethargy

If not now, when? It’s the perfect time. Not too hot, not too cold. The longer days and mild May weather urge you to get out even in the early-morning and after dinner. This simple but magical antidote to lethargy is just to go outside and walk. It’s non-controversial and unlike most things it’s unanimous and besides, we’ve all been cooped up for the better part of a year.

The scientific community, the population at large, special interest groups all agree — walking is good for you. So good that if it could be put into a pill it would be the next multimillion wonder drug and one without side effects — only benefits. Walking is a gentle, low-impact form of exercise for which we are all uniquely adapted. We have all the equipment we need; legs with hinged joints that allow them to swing and move us forward, feet to land on and keep us upright, and arms that move to and fro to help with balance and momentum. Walking is free and easy and good for all ages. It gives you energy, boosts circulation, increases oxygen supply, wakes up stiff joints by bathing them in nutrient-rich synovial fluid, and eases muscle tension.

The scientific studies are impressive. Here are a few observations:

- Walking helps maintain a healthy weight. It tones abdominal and buttock muscles and whittles your waist.
- Walking prevents or improves management of heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. A 15-minute walk after meals provides optimal benefit, especially for blood sugar control.
- The farther an older person can walk in six minutes, the better he or she performs on memory and logic tests.
- A mere 30-minute walk increases certain cells that are markers of immunity; these are the cells that fight infection and cancer. Studies have shown reduction in breast and colon cancer.
- Daylight walking increases vitamin D levels.

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(Antidote to Lethargy, cont. from page 6)

- Walking reduces stress and walking in the woods has been shown to lower cortisol, the stress hormone.
- Walking strengthen the bones.

There are other virtues in walking — sometimes intangible. Walking gives you a chance to think, come up with ideas and discover solutions. Actually the best way to find solutions to problems is to walk or sleep. Haven't we all at one time or another woken up to find that we know what needs to be done about that pesky problem? When we're not doing "thinking walking" we can experience walking as a meditation. You can let your mind tune out from all chatter and just experience the present moment. Walking is a chance to experience your surroundings in a way not possible when riding in a car with the world whizzing by. You can notice the earliest signs of changing seasons, the blooming of certain flowers, the smell of certain flowers after a rain, the feel of the terrain underfoot and the breeze and sun on your face.

Now that the days are getting longer and warmer, more and more of us (and our pets) choose to spend time outdoors. Walking in fields and woods, gardening and outdoor spring cleanup are just a few of the many activities available. This time of year also marks the beginning of tick season. The month of May is officially Tick Awareness Month. Who knew?

Preventing disease is always goal #1. When spending time outdoors around leaf litter, high grasses, shrubs and in the woods, spray skin and clothing with insect repellents such as DEET. Long sleeves and pants legs tucked into socks also keeps ticks away. Wearing light colored clothing makes ticks easier to spot and remove. Once indoors, check all parts of your body for ticks. If you remove a tick quickly (within 24-36 hours) you can greatly reduce your chance of infection. The longer the tick is attached, the greater the chance of acquiring disease from it. Keep a fine tipped tweezer handy and grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible, pulling straight up slowly, making sure to remove all parts of it. Clean the area with soap and water. If recommended by your physician, a single dose of 200-mg doxycycline might prevent future disease.

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

Birthdays!**Twenty-four residents celebrate birthdays in May**

There is a 26-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. **May** birthdays belong to:

Josephine Brunjes, Molly King, Rudy Sacco, Janet Tivy, LuAnn DeGenaro, Beverly Hallock, Dorothy Kresge, Stephen Johnson, Marjorie Van Dyke, Dorothea Nelson, David Quinlan, Jill Roosma, Betty Furey, Erika Mueller, Richard Edelstein, Susan Dana, Mary Misch, Linda Stern, Norman Moskowitz, Alan Kantrow, Betty Davis, Henry Fenn, Eden Gruenberg and Joel Margolis

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

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EDITOR

Andy Pincus

PRODUCTION

Ned Dana

Michelle Rosier

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana, John Gillespie, Dorothea Nelson, Janet Tivy, Margot Yondorf

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Ned Dana

CONTRIBUTORS

Molly Pomerance, Elske Smith

In Memoriam

Margaret "Peggy" Axelrod

Nov. 18, 1926 to March 25, 2021

Claire Lowery

March 31, 1931 to March 26, 2021

Leonard Allen

Jan. 16, 1924 to April 12, 2021

Temptation on the Champs Elysees

We are ambling down the Champs Élysées. It is a pleasant fall day, the streets are loaded with tourists, and the sidewalks are messier than usual. The stores seem trite, trashy, not at all as I remember from visits to Paris years ago. But ...

Suddenly, across the street, my eye is caught by a tall, masterful building. It is narrow, the front is all glass, and there are many, many floors all filled with small cheerful objects. I haul my husband across the street, intent on further investigation. Above the building, neon lights spell the word: "Optique Élysée." The small objects reveal themselves as eyeglasses, every shape, size and color, a feast for the eyes. I develop a crying need for new glasses. We enter the store.

Right inside the entrance is a row of comfortable armchairs. My husband happily settles into one, unfurls his copy of the International Herald Tribune. I ask one of the knowledgeable-looking young men floating around: "Où sont les lunettes pour dames?"

I am directed upstairs. Around me stretch acres of glass-fronted shelves, all resplendent with glorious, dramatic, original eyeglass frames. I wander over to the nearest one, my heart pounding. Whichever shall I choose? A white-coated vision of femininity, wearing horn rims, approaches me with a tray. "You will need this Madame," she says "Take your time. Indeed. This process cannot be hurried. I slither from case to case, taking one here, one there. Before I know it the tray is full, and there are still so many left. The vision hurries over with another tray. She loads the trays onto an elegant dressing table, in front of a huge mirror.

Finally I stop, aware that the time has come to consider the options. But no...it seems there is something else she has on her mind.

"Mais où est Monsieur?" she asks. My goodness, She knows that I am not alone. Obviously the euros for my putative purchases have to be from elsewhere, not my pocket. I stifle my feminist instincts (never too strong) and point downstairs. "Il est en bas."

My husband, not too happy at being torn away from the events of the day before, is brought up to join me. Another armchair is carefully positioned where he will have a clear view of my decisions.

"Monsieur," the saleslady inquires, "Café, thé, chocolat, cognac?" At this my husband brightens and makes his selection. Hot chocolate and a plate of toothsome petit fours appear. He turns his gaze to the mirror where I am trying to decide which ones won't work. Alas, they all work. I am no nearer than before to picking out my new adornment. I look at the prices. It all becomes much clearer.

Several trayfuls are eliminated. I am left with four possibilities. I march around the room, from mirror to mirror. Should I go for the black ones lined in red? The purple striped with yellow? The orange ones with gray and black stars? How about the silver ones that swoop upwards? Horrors! I return to the trays I had discarded. Suddenly, I am transfixed. There it sits, the answer. Fuchsia. Rectangular, yes, but not totally. A subtle variation in

the shape. I gaze into the mirror. This is the one people will notice. If nothing else I will be remembered for THESE GLASSES. I gaze admiringly at my reflection. I must have them. Of course, if I do they will be the only ones. The price approaches the sum total of six tickets to a Broadway musical. I had hoped for a few pairs. Nothing doing.

I ask the advice I should maybe have sought earlier. But my husband is not critical. He loves everything I wear or hang on my person, so his opinion is seldom very helpful. Occasionally he'll say something like "it isn't Molly." He cannot say that about these shocking pink treasures, and he doesn't. I leave with my delicious purchase. It is a triumph. Those frames have always, when flaunted in public, had the desired effect. And with the proper lenses they improve my vision greatly. I am planning to visit Optique Élysée on my next visit to Paris, whenever that may be. I suggest you do, too.



Molly with her treasure

Molly Pomerance