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## From Fear to Freedom (1939)

Rachel's story book [From Fear to Freedom](#) has the story of Grandpa Steve's escape from Nazi Germany.

## Snow (1970-1979)

My brothers and I made igloos in our front yard during the winter in Skokie. I was the smallest so usually I was the only one able to actually use it as intended.

We also made a "resupply tunnel" for our snow fort.

We played quite a bit of touch football in our back yard with David's friend Richard Fefferman being the 4th. Once there was a lot of snow with an icy crust on top. As the smallest I could run quickly on the top while the others sank in, so all of a sudden I became the "star" but my success was short-lived because as soon I stepped in a hole in the crust I was stuck in snow up to my waist and barely unable to move. As the game continued, there were more and more holes and no intact crust left to bear even my weight.

Our dog Pepper enjoyed eating snow. He wanted to go for a walk when it snowed and have a little snack. In his final winter (1978-1979?) he couldn't go outside easily so whenever there was new fresh snow I would take a shovelful and bring it inside for him to enjoy.

## Spelling Test (1975)

Text: [Spelling Test](#)

Video:

## Appendicitis (1978)

[Appendicitis](#) (Story about getting diagnosed with appendicitis April 1978)

## Programming (1979)

I got a programmable TI-57 or TI-58 calculator while I was in 8th grade and wrote all kinds of programs with its display which could only show numbers, a couple of hundred bytes of volatile memory, and no means of saving my program. I once wrote a program which reallocated how much space was used for code versus data, and then had the program annihilate part of the code which had already been executed in order to have more memory available. I wrote a paper

about computers for my 8th grade term project (\*\*TO BE SCANNED) and my classmates were all interested since they had used a computer before.

My brother David taught me how to program in basic on the mark sense cards he used for batch jobs on the Wang at Evanston Township High School but I never executed my programs until I showed up as a Freshman at ETHS with a baseball strategy game written on a big box full of cards. Of course I misunderstood how to define arrays (writing AI instead of A[I]) and had to rewrite almost everything in order to get the batch job to produce any results whatsoever.

## Graduations (1983, 1986, 1989)

TBD policeman, 3 years Caltech, MIT vs 4 ETHS, skip Caltech, MIT, last night at Caltech

## Two Israeli Stores (1985)

On my first trip to Israel, I had to replace my shoes and the shoe salesman tried to convince me to make aliyah. I thought: "Where else but Israel do you go into a store to buy shoes and the salesman tries to Sell you a country!"

TBD Bakery bag 13 vs 31 error \*\*\*\*

## Extravaganza (1986)

After graduating from Caltech in June 1986, I flew home early, missing my own graduation to be with my Mom as she was undergoing some neck surgery which went fine. I then flew on to Israel to participate in a scientific exchange program at the Weizmann Institute of Science (Machon Veitzman). This was my second trip to Israel having attended summer school at Bar-Ilan University during 1985.

I shared a flat with a bunch of guys from London including one who recognized the calendar on my desk which was a gift from my friend Jeffery Elikan who had studied with him at Cambridge University.

I spent those months between Caltech and MIT doing research in combinatorics with Prof. Amitai Regev in the Department of Pure Math. (Applied Math is called Matimatika Shemushit, literally utile math, which reminded me of the polite Hebrew term for bathroom Beth Shemush, literally "the utilities", so I was glad not to be doing "bathroom math".) But mostly I enjoyed the country, visiting cousins in some corner of Israel every weekend, from Arad in the South to Moshav Keshet in the Golan.

I relished the bus trips around the country. The scenery was magnificent and it was a great opportunity to mingle with the population. I had read an article about someone who struck up

conversation on a bus between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and felt he was learning so much about Israeli society that he spent the rest of the day going back and forth between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and talking. That was taking things to an extreme, but I did resolve to talk to people on the bus.

Having graduated from Caltech where there was a grand total of two Jewish girls in the Hillel, I was also looking for an opportunity to date. My Mom had warned me not to “come home with a sabra” saying that they were just interested in getting an American passport. There was no one serious, but there were a few funny stories. On a bus trip up to Haifa to visit my Dad’s cousin Batya Oppenheimer and her son Dan. (Batya’s husband Al had passed away since my visit the previous year.) I started talking to a chayelet (female soldier) who was sitting behind me. Nothing came of it but Batya and Dan were surprised Shabbat afternoon when I told them I had a girl I was supposed to meet nearby. Another girl I took out to dinner pointed out that I “forgot” some coins on the table. Apparently the custom of leaving a tip had not penetrated her community.

## Wedding (1990)

I found a [webpage](#) with which to explain Henne to clueless ashkenazim ...

I had never even heard of a Henne before Patricia's wedding in 1989 but it was so much fun. Perhaps Mom can find the picture of me showing off my palm to the camera - my smile is so huge and genuine. At our wedding in June 1990, we had a civil wedding on Thursday and the Jewish wedding on Sunday. Thursday evening in L'Union the backyard was full of tables for an amazing reception. (Mom called it "[My Big Fat Greek-Morrocan Wedding](#)." Papi even removed doors inside the house to make more tables. When it got dark (around 9pm) some people left but the closest friends and family including Bob, Julia, David, Maureen went up to the living room to continue the celebration with a Henne. Mom, Daniele and Papi played music. And that was really when the party started to rock.

TBD butcher singing.

## Gabby's Birth and Beyond (1991-1993)

### Ambulance

Tbd

### Mimouna, Train

Tbd

## Birth

TBD O2, incubator, diaper

## Early Days

[First month](#) @youtub

TBD Going out

TBD Sylvain 0

TBD Ash trays

TBD Macintosh dialog box

## Visit by Grandma and Grandpa

From [Helen's eulogy](#) to my mom [Grandma Sarane](#).

Another memory I will keep is the smile on her face the first time she saw my baby daughter Gabrielle. We were living in France at the time and my mother in law came to visit us a couple of months after the birth. They took a plane to fly to France, then a train from Paris to Bordeaux which was due at 7 am in the station. My baby daughter was sleeping in the stroller and I left her with a friend in the apartment building we were living in. Arrival in Bordeaux was chaotic. Stepping out of the train was a challenge, we had to get the Amigo back into position. After that we had to go from quay 3 to central station, which required a special elevator. The elevator got stuck so that we had to get help. We finally arrived at the house and I went to my neighbor and friend to bring Gabrielle. When I stepped into the apartment pushing the stroller, I saw a big smile on my mother in law's face. She was ecstatic. From that time Gabby was a source of pride and happiness for my mother in law. I can still see Gabby sitting on my mother in law's lap, trying to figure the Amigo's control when we were at the mall. Since then every grandchild has enjoyed that special ride on Grand Ma's lap wherever we were going.

## Birth of Jonathan

Gabby was almost 3 years old when Jonathan was born. We took her to the hospital to see her baby brother. On the way there I saw a McDonald's toy on the ground in the parking lot. It was a windup "french fries" character. I gave it to Gabby and in a moment of inspiration I told Gabby that it was a gift from her brother. Gabby said that Jon was "so nice" to do that. Instant sibling jealousy averted! I guess she was a little too small to realize that there isn't a great gift assortment in the womb, so babies generally arrive empty-handed. [[video of toy](#), [photo](#)]

## Election 2008

### Maryland Primary

TBD

## Wisconsin Primary

TBD

## Volunteering in West Virginia

TBD

## Deer after 2008 General Election

I was volunteering with the Obama campaign and as it started to get dark I was heading back through Penn valley when I stopped behind another car. A police car pulled up behind me and the cop walked out of his car past me and drew his gun. I thought some people were overwrought because of the election but this is too much. He continued past the car in front of me and shot his gun. I was in shock. He then returned to his car without a word and the car in front of me moved forward to reveal that there was a deer on the road. The policeman had been called because there was an injured deer and the policeman had put the deer out of its misery.

XTBD

## Math Stories

### Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics (1993)

#### Word Game

Here's a game I played when I taught at HCSSiM in 1993. My TA's and I would give the person at the board a secret word just before he or she was about to start the class. The lecture had to be adapted to include that word at least once. At the end of class every student could try to guess the magic word. The teacher won if he did it so seamlessly that no one was able to guess.

Pro: The class was in rapt attention to everything we said from start to finish.

Con: The class was more focused on our vocabulary than on the mathematical content.

#### My Dad's Math

TBD

#### Sleep Deprivation (HCSSiM 1993)

Towards the end of HCSSiM, sleep deprivation was catching up to some of the students, and their attention was lagging despite my threats to throw chalk at any students that actually snored. Finally, I announced that's it, three laps. That got everyone's attention. What do you

mean? I told them to stand on their chairs and climb up on the table going around the room. They then proceeded to do three laps. The noise attracted the attention of a teacher from an adjacent classroom from some other summer program. He entered the room in a big huff just as everyone was settling back into their places. Everyone saw him come in, but everyone resolutely kept their attention on the board as I resumed my lecture. Seeing nothing to complain about and no sign of where the noise came from, he returned to his classroom without saying anything, followed by riotous laughter.

## The Dodecahedron (HCSSiM 1993)

I was teaching about voting schemes. These are collections of voters called winning coalitions such that a superset of a winning coalition is also winning, and of any pair of complementary sets exactly one is winning. Many (but not all) voting schemes can be described by assigning each voter a positive weight. Winning coalitions are those with over half of the total weight. A voting scheme is “fair” if its symmetry group is transitive. Democracy is the only fair weighted voting scheme and it requires an odd number of voters, so I asked the workshop whether there was a fair voting scheme with an even number of voters.

Everyone said this was impossible. I said let’s try to prove it. We had already enumerated voting schemes with 2 and 4 voters so the next interesting case was 6 voters. Just like Riemann and Lubachavsky tried to prove the parallel postulate by contradiction, we assumed there was a fair voting scheme on six voters. But if that was true then it would have to have some ridiculous property which led to another ridiculous property which implied that certain coalitions would have to be winning or losing. To the workshop’s surprise, we had stumbled onto the unique (up to isomorphism) fair voting scheme on six voters.

But still we could not visualize the voting scheme. We started to draw triangles representing the 3 voter winning coalitions and gluing them together.

Lubachavsky stumbled into a geometry modeled by a sphere in which antipodal points were identified and “lines” were great circles. We stumbled into a voting scheme modeled by an icosahedron in which antipodal points were identified and minimal winning coalitions were faces.

I tried to draw an icosahedron on the board in order to really allow everyone to visualize it, but my drawing was not very good. I remembered that Benjy Fischer (?) was teaching about polyhedrons in his workshop and had a particularly nice icosahedron made out of sticks and bungee cords. I opened the back door directly connecting the two classrooms. Benjy was holding up the icosahedron in his open hand and making some point about it. Not noticing me appearing behind him, I grabbed the icosahedron and returned to my classroom followed by Benjy, his junior staff and much of his class. To their surprise, I used their platonic solid to demonstrate the unique fair voting scheme on six voters.



## Two-Factor Authentication

"I wanted to check when you pick Fall classes. I have your student number 13579831 and password, but can you help with the 2-factor authentication."

[later]

"Never mind, I figured it out myself. It is 1483 x 9157."

## Sunscreen

Suppose that I just arrived at a swimming pool in the sun and I want to swim for 1 hour and I have 30PF sunscreen with me, but I know I have 90PF sunscreen in my room. What is the longest walk in the sun (to and from my room) which I can justify by using the high sun protection factor.

## Passover Memories

Grandma liked inviting the whole family and hosting them for pesach since could no longer have pesach in her own home. We always went to different locations, sometimes the program was big and took over the hotel, Sometimes it was smaller compared to the size of the resort so we shared it with the normal clientele which often was nice because that ensured that there would definitely be mixed swimming for example.

### Skokie, IL Passover Story by Helen (1988)

I met my mother-in-law during Pesach of 1988, I was just finishing my training as an engineer and came to Boston from France for an internship.

When I came into the house, I understood right away the handicap my future mother in law was facing with severe arthritis. She had been bed ridden the previous year, and could now sit, get some mobility with the Amigo, but she could not climb steps, so that she was confined in the family room of the house.

Yet she was in total command of preparing for the seder, giving precise directions to everybody. She could tell me the horseradish was in the back of the second shelf of the fridge. I was turning to Dan in awe, "How does she know?" She had not been in the kitchen for months. It looked surreal. Anyhow, I learned to appreciate her incredible will to get things done, get things done her way and I developed great respect for her.

### Scottsdale, AZ Passover (2002)

Grandma invited the whole family to Scottsdale, Arizona for Passover, They had all kinds of activities for the family including a petting zoo in the parking lot for the kids to interact with sheep, goats, rabbits and other animals. One day we were in the elevator with a lady:

**Lady:** I see you are wearing a ... How do you call it? Skullcap? Are you part of the Jewish group at the hotel?

**Me:** Yes, we are here for the Passover program.

**Lady:** How nice. Can I ask you a delicate question?

**Me:** Sure, no problem.

**Lady:** Those goats and sheep in the parking lot.... Are they for your Passover rituals....  
[pause]

**Me:** Oh no, we don't do that any more... Not for the last couple of thousand years.

Mishap on drive to San Diego TBD

## Orlando, FL Passover (2007)

For Passover, Grandpa and Charlotte invited the whole family to Orlando, FL (where David, Maureen and Kathy lived). The hotel was "just" across the road from Sea World which we were able to walk to on yomtov (though the parking lot was so huge it was still a decent walk).

The Florida association of Deaf teachers was having a convention at the hotel at the same time. It was quite an experience coming down to the lobby and seeing perhaps a thousand deaf people socializing while waiting to board the buses for that morning's destination. You could see a dense crowd of people filling the lobby passionately communicating with each other making gestures in ASL but with an almost complete silence.

Now, my daughter Gabby loves languages. (At the time she already knew English, French, Spanish and Hebrew.) By chance, she had recently started to learn ASL on her own, so she was very excited to have a chance to test her ASL skills and was able to answer a teacher using the "E" sign going up and down to ask where the elevator was.

Later, we went to the elevator to go to our room on the 6th floor. A few deaf teachers were already in the elevator and one of them standing next to the buttons recognized that we were not part of their group, so she asked us using her spoken voice what floor we wished to go to. Using the ASL sign for the number six, she raised her three middle fingers to indicate that we wanted to go to the sixth floor. The deaf teacher, not expecting Gabby to know sign language, assumed that three raised fingers indicated that we wanted to go to the 3rd floor. Eventually we cleared up the misunderstanding.



This trip is also where I came up with the suntan lotion problem described above.

# Asia Trip (2015)

([Shutterfly photo album](#))

## Starbucks Story

Après 25 heures de vol et 12 heures de décalage horaire, nous avons atterri à Singapour. Une douche rapide et un coup de métro au centre-ville, les bagages en main, nous nous sommes émerveillés de découvrir une belle ville moderne. Nous nous sommes arrêtés à Starbucks pour partager nos expériences avec la famille. Ensuite, Helen s'est perdu en revenant des toilettes, mais heureusement elle a été sauvée par un barista amical à un autre Starbucks à proximité.

## Chinese Tour Guide

TBD

# Solar Eclipse (2017)

## The Trip Down

Rachel and I were driving to Charleston, South Carolina to see the first [total solar eclipse in the US](#) since 1991 with my cousins [the Adelmans](#) and my friend Constantin Staykoff and his family. We would leave on Friday, August 18, spend Shabbat in Bethesda, MD on the way down. We would then pick up Ben and Jon at the Charlotte, North Carolina airport and Gabby would fly directly into Charleston.

Grandpa was living in the Ring House at the time, so stopping in Bethesda at the time was also an opportunity to see my Dad. Unfortunately Grandpa's health was declining and passed away on September 4, so this was the last time that we were able to see him.

On the way back, Ben, Jon and Samantha would be driving while everyone else flew back from Myrtle Beach. (A huge crowd was descending for the occasion and flights back from Charleston itself were completely booked.)

However, Sunday morning on the way to Charlotte NC airport, I saw the weather report was ominous. It might rain near the coast and even if it wasn't raining, it would likely be cloudy Monday afternoon making it impossible to witness the eclipse. I called Ben and Jon and told them about the situation and suggested that the sky would be clear if they went further inland, but Rachel and I couldn't do so because Gabby was flying into Charleston and our return flight were from Myrtle Beach. However, if they could find me a rental car I could meet them at the Charlotte airport and give them my car with which to drive to a better spot. They liked the idea and visited all of the rental car providers at the airport. Unfortunately, nothing was available at any company not only at the airport, but not anywhere in the Charlotte area due to the huge number of people coming for the eclipse. Then Jon and Ben had a brainstorm, they called U-Haul and reserved a moving van, so Rachel, I and later Gabby ended up completing the rest

of this vacation in a noisy diesel truck while the others continued on to the Carolina Landing RV Resort in Fair Play, South Carolina where they were able to enjoy a swimming pool while watching the solar eclipse.

Rachel and I continued on to Charleston and picked up Gabby who was surprised to find us driving a moving van. We stayed overnight with the Staykoffs in Mt. Pleasant SC. The next morning Citadel astronomer Saul Adelman joined us, we studied the weather report and decided our odds would be best if went to the Prince of Orange Mall in Orangeburg SC to watch the eclipse with Aaron Adelman.

## Essay by Rachel

The crickets stopped chirping. The mid-summer heat had been overtaken by an eerie chill. I couldn't believe my eyes. As the moon passed in front of the sun, suddenly the mall parking lot was plunged into darkness, as if someone had flipped a lightswitch. For many weeks we had been planning this trip to South Carolina to see the eclipse in Charleston with family friends. However, we did not take the weather into account.

It seemed like the sun was going to be hidden behind clouds, denying us this once in a lifetime opportunity to see an eclipse. We looked up weather forecasts and consulted maps online to see if we could quickly drive for an unobstructed view of the eclipse. We decided to meet with some cousins at a mall parking lot about an hour inland.

Others had the same idea. As we pulled into the parking lot, we noticed people sitting in lawn chairs wearing eclipse glasses so they could look directly at the sun and the "bite" that the moon had already taken out of it.

As the moon encroached further onto the sun, all that remained of the sun's disc, was a paper-thin crescent. It's light wafted through the foliage of the trees, forming thousands of tiny crescents on the ground. The shadow passing over me, made it look like my legs were covered in scales.

In an instant, the moon completely covered the remainder of the sun. Suddenly, the night sky appeared, filled with stars and planets. The sun itself was conspicuous by its absence. The shape of the moon could be seen as a pitch-black shadow surrounded by ghostly white rays projecting in all directions. It was night where we were, in South Carolina, but ten miles in any direction, it was a bright summer afternoon. The horizon in every direction was painted red, as if by a thousand sunsets.

Someone started a countdown. 10. 9. 8.... Soon, the sun would reappear between the hilltops along the edge of the moon. Everyone reached into their pockets to grab their eclipse glasses so they would not get blinded when the sun reappeared. 3.2.1. And there was light. The crickets started chirping again. I just witnessed the experience of a lifetime, but for the animals in the fields nearby, it was just the beginning of a new day.

So many people had come to this tiny corner of mostly rural South Carolina to see the eclipse, that it took us hours to reach the airport for our flight home. Once we arrived at the Myrtle Beach Airport, Delta informed us that our flight had been overbooked and they were looking for volunteers. They offered us each \$1000, a new flight the next day, meal vouchers, and free rooms in the resort area at Myrtle Beach. We were amazed by our luck. Delta was basically paying \$2000 to extend our vacation another day.

## Myrtle Beach

The hotels were so comfortable. It was next to an amusement park. There was a place on the lake where you could give food, and all the fish knew that food sometimes appeared, but they didn't know when, so they kept struggling to stay above the surface in order to get food as long as possible, only returning to the bottom to regain their strength.

## Hamakom Yenachem (2017)

My father [Stephen Gunther Loeb](#) passed away in Rockville, MD on September 4, 2017. September 5, The next day we held the Funeral at Kol Sholom. Burial at Judean Garden, Olney, MD. Meal of comfort and Mincha at Bob's house and then Jonathan drove me back in an enormous thunderstorm to Philadelphia for the remainder of shiva. Stopped at Yeshiva in Baltimore for maariv. Elie's father-in-law David Friedman recognized me and introduced me to the Rabbi who saw this as an opportunity for all of the yeshiva buchors to practice the mitzvah of comforting mourners, so dozens of students formed a line and took turns [wishing us המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים](#)

## Mexico Trip (2018)

### King of Cancun

TBD

### Dolphins

Someone asked about the photo of me with the dolphin at Dolphinaris Cancun at the La Isla Cancun Shopping Center with Gabby and Ben. I searched for "Dolphins" on Google Photos to show the photos of my trip there on September 8, 2018. I found the rest of the photos I wanted along with photos of other occasions with dolphins, but it also showed one photo which was oddly devoid of dolphins. I wondered why Google's algorithm would have included it until I noticed a couple of rock formations in the picture which kind of resembled a pair of dolphins heading towards and away from the camera. ([Photos](#))

## Roxie

3/1/2024: After having Missy over for two days, Roxie and I were returning to my apartment from our morning walk. Ruby and her owner were returning from their same walk and we were talking, and the dogs were playing as they headed to the elevator and I gravitated towards my hallway. I saw Roxie dart down our hallway and dart back to Ruby repeatedly. Trying to get her attention and then going down the hallway and returning. Even tugging gently on her leash.

Suddenly I could “read” Roxie’s mind, “C’mon Ruby, I just had Missy over for two nights and it was so much fun. So you need to come over to my place and we can play for a couple of days too. It is so much fun. C’mon!” I explained the meaning of this to Ruby’s owner and we all had a good laugh.

## Election 2024

## Improv

### Resume

#### Classes

- Earlier using quicken?
- 2019: CSz 301 (summer), CSz Long Form (fall with Alan Williams), CSz Workshop (fall)
- 2020: CSz 301 (summer), CSz Rec League (winter), CSz Long Form, CSz Rec League (summer with Kevin Regan), CSz Storytellers (winter), CSz Intermediate (winter)
- 2021: CSz
- 2022: PhIT 201 (fall with Tara Gadomski)
- 2023: PhIT 301 (winter with Dom Arp), Lunchtime Group with Tara Gadomski, LMSN Improv Why Not (spring)

Instructors: Noah Herman, Bobbi Block, Dave Jadico, Don Montrey, Kristin Finger, Kelly Jennings, Dave Dristas,

#### Performances

- CSz ?01 showcase (8/11/2019)
- [CSz Long Form “Flaming Pineapples” Showcase \(7/13/2020\)](#)
- [CSz 301 Showcase \(Aug. 2020\)](#)
- [CSz 301 Showcase \(12/7/20\)](#)
- CSz Rec League Showcase (12/20/20)
- [PhIT 201 Showcase \(11/6/22\)](#)
- Lunchtime Group Showcase (3/12/23)
- PhIT 301 Showcase “Puzzle Cult” (3/22/23)
- Comedy Sportz 301 Showcase (2x), 401
-

## A-Z

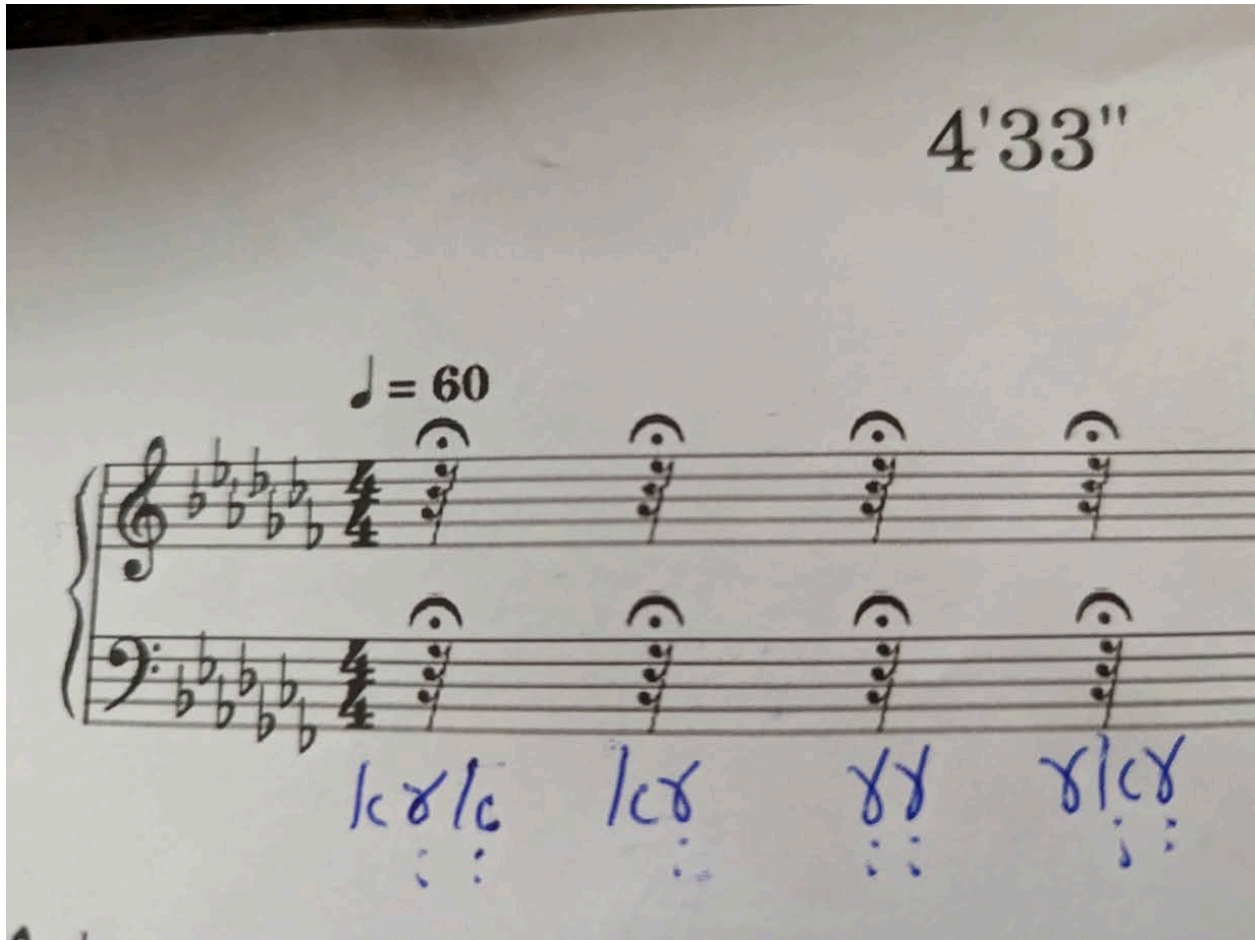
Part of what makes improv great is teamwork. There is an alphabet improv where 2 players make a scene in which they alternate saying sentences first starting with "A" then "B" and so on. The tension builds because there are few words that start with "X" and most of them are hard to use at the beginning of a sentence, but the person who gets "W" can make his or her partner's life easier by setting it up with something like

- "What kind of percussion instruments should we include in our band?"
- "Wheel her over to radiology immediately to see if her bone is broken."
- "Well shiver me timbers there has got to be a way to find the buried treasure on this here blasted treasure map."
- "Why is this sugarless gum so sweet?"
- "Why can't I watch 'Debbie does Dallas', Mom?"

## Writings

### Lyrics to 4'33"

Ref: <https://musescore.com/user/19556536/scores/7066373>



## Jokes

[Jokes](#)

## Dreams

[Oddly detailed Dream](#)

## Mathematical Writings

[Richman Games](#)

[Voting Schemes and The Shape of Democracy](#)

[Fair Districts PA](#)

...

## [Philadelphia Jewish Voice Articles](#) (2005-2019)

[Dan Loeb's Philadelphia Jewish Voice Articles](#)



## Conservadox

How do you describe conservadox?

I sometimes say it means I'm equally uncomfortable in an orthodox or conservative synagogue. At the orthodox synagogue I'm uncomfortable with how they segregate women and don't allow them to lead services, I can't relate to maintaining traditions ultimately copied from Polish aristocracy as if they were G-d given, and while I appreciate Torah study, I don't think people should be supported by others so they can study around the clock without the goal of a profession. In a conservative synagogue, I'm uncomfortable with Bible study premised that G-d didn't write or even inspire any of these texts. People can write books, so if you believe at all in G-d then why can't G-d write one or at least "ghost-write" one. Basically I believe in science and I am progressive, but I also believe in a G-d who has a role in the world. Finally, I'm not one to shove their beliefs on others. The universe and G-d are just too complicated to be that sure of anything, so I don't appreciate it when others are overly certain that they know how the universe works and especially why certain bad things have happened to specific people and groups of people.

## Grammar

### Old Bromides and New Sulfites

"A Way With Words" recently mentioned Gelett Burgess' 1906 book "[Are You a Bromide?](#)" in response to a question about the word "blurb". This book also added new meanings to the terms Bromide and Sulfite.

The word "[blurb](#)", meaning a short description of a book, film, or other product written for promotional purposes, was coined by Burgess in 1907, in attributing the cover copy of his book, *Are You a Bromide?*, to a Miss Belinda Blurb. His definition of "[blurb](#)" is "a flamboyant advertisement; an inspired testimonial".<sup>[21]</sup>

In that book "Are You a Bromide?" and related essay "The Sulphitic Theory", Burgess is credited for coining the usage of the word "[bromide](#)" as a personification of a sedate, dull person who said boring things.<sup>[22]</sup> Bromide meant either the boring person himself or the trite statement of that person. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelett\\_Burgess#Legacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelett_Burgess#Legacy))

So my question is whether there is any sense in chemistry by which Bromides and Sulfites are "opposites" as is the case with Gelett Burgess' neologisms.

## You're Welcome

Dear Martha, Grant and Stefanie!

Last week I was about to leave the doctor's office and another patient held out the door for me, so I said "Thank you" and he replied "You bet". I would have said "You're welcome" but I have

certainly heard "You bet" or even "You betcha" before, but it got me wondering what it meant exactly. Does it mean that you can be so confident that this is the sort of thing I'll do for it that you can feel safe betting that I will.

In Hebrew, people say "bevakasha" which is exactly the same word people use for "please" which is kind of strange.

When I lived in France people would say "il n'y a pas de quoi" or "de rien" which both remind me of the English expression "It was the least I could do" which the comedian Bob Bedore really ridiculed in his skit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWxjW-x1-g>, so if someone tells me "Thank you for this wonderful salad." I might jokingly respond: "It was the least I could do. Believe me if I could have come here empty handed I totally would have, but I thought hard about it and this is really the bare minimum I thought I could get away with."

Anyhow, I would like to end by thanking you both for making such a wonderful show. It is really a highlight of my week!

## The History of Spelling (May 2022)

Here is an episode of "A Way With Words" when I called in with a question about spelling: <https://www.waywordradio.org/you-talk-like-a-sausage/>

## Past Participles

I did a little research this morning on the words I was wondering about over lunch (esteemed colleague, beloved son, balanced diet, kept woman, iced tea, scratched record, broken sidewalk, damned souls, darned socks, forgotten words, tired workers, tiered cakes, fallen soldiers, rented apartments, rent clothing, spoiled children, spoiled milk, frozen bananas, and "[shaken not stirred](#)" martinis, ...) and I learned that when past (and present) participles are used as if they were adjectives they are known as "participial adjectives."

- And it turns out that "[esteemed](#)" looks like a participial adjective because it originally was one (back in the 1530s!). The verb "esteem" came from the old French "estimer" which mean to "to estimate or determine".
- Similarly, "[beloved](#)" appeared in the 14th century from the verb "belove" which was a sort of reflexive version of "love" (ie. to please)
- This is very similar to how "bespoke" and "[bespoken](#)" are now only adjectives but derived from the verb "bespeak" (meaning to speak for, or arrange beforehand) back in the 1580s.
- "[Unkempt](#)" comes from the middle English verb "kemben" (to com) so it literally means "uncombed". "The verb kemb is rare after the 1400s, but its negative past participle form endures."
- "[Beguiled](#)" and "[befallen](#)" are similar, but I think that "beguile" and "befall" are still acceptable verbs if a bit quaint.

This just reminded me of how passive verbs and especially participial adjectives let the subject of the action recede into the background as unaccountable.

Here is an example I remember from a [TED talk](#) which I couldn't find at first but I found via Google on [this page](#)

1. John beat Mary
2. Mary was beaten by John.
3. Mary was beaten.
4. Mary was battered.
5. Mary is a battered woman.

The first sentence, Katz explained, “is a good English sentence: a subject, a verb, and an object.” The second sentence is the first sentence written in the passive voice, and according to Katz “a whole lot has happened. The focus has shifted from John to Mary. John is now at the end of the sentence, which means that John is very close to dropping off the map of our psychic plane. So it’s not just bad writing to use the passive voice, it’s also political. And the political effect has been to shift the focus from John to Mary.”

In the third sentence John is gone. In the fourth, the term “battered” is substituted for “beaten,” and in the final sentence of the sequence “you can see that Mary has a new identity. She is now a battered woman and John is no longer part of the conversation.”

And to that sequence of sentences I could even add

- 0. John beats women. (Which makes it clear that this is not specific to Mary)
- -1. John is a wife-batterer. (Which makes it clear that John has a problem and it has nothing to do with the women he beats).

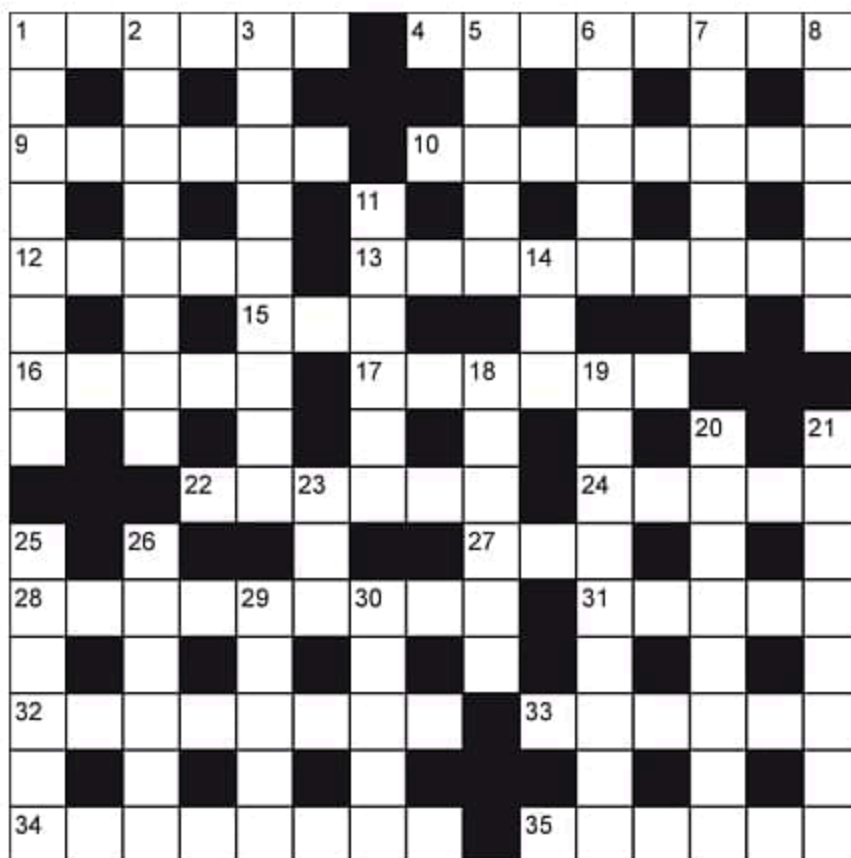
## Puzzles

[November 5, 1996](#) ('Election Day Puzzle') and [alternate grid](#)



# TELEGRAPH CROSSWORD 5,062

13 JANUARY 1942



## Across

- 1 A stage company (6)  
 4 The direct route preferred by the Roundheads (5,3)  
 9 One of the ever-greens (6)  
 10 Scented (8)  
 12 Course with an apt finish (5)  
 13 Much that could be got from a timber merchant (5,4)  
 15 We have nothing and are in debt (3)  
 16 Pretend (5)  
 17 Is this town ready for a flood? (6)  
 22 The little fellow has some beer; it makes me lose colour, I say (6)  
 24 Fashion of a famous French family (5)  
 27 Tree (3)  
 28 One might of course use this tool to remove weeds (6,2)

## Down

- 1 Official instruction not to forget the servants (8)  
 2 Said to be a remedy for a burn (5,3)  
 3 Kind of alias (9)  
 5 A disagreeable company (5)  
 6 Debtors may have to this money for their debts unless of course their creditors do it to the debts (5)  
 7 Boat that should be able to suit anyone (6)  
 8 Gear (6)  
 11 Business with the end in sight (6)  
 14 The right sort of woman to start a dame school (3)  
 18 "The war" (anag.) (6)  
 19 When hammering take care not to hit this (5,4)  
 20 Making a good example (6)

# To Be Done

## Philadelphia Furniture Story

TBD

## Ryetown, NY Passover (1996)

Security guard.TBD

My Trip to Philadelphia XTBD

## Baltimore (2015)

Driving while White privilege story TBD

## Tree Falling on my Tesla (2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HAMJOykt-hk>

## Daniel Seth Loeb

Smithsonian and Media Group TBD

## Lancaster Game Convention Shabbat (2009)

tbd