Greetings! December 2018

Nasr-had an award-winning year. The Egyptian American Organization presented him with a lifetime, Outstanding Achievement Award, by which he was very humbled. This, talent of his, I suggest, could be due to his "Academic DNA." One of Nasr's students traced Nasr's Academic DNA, meaning, who were his professor's professor's professor etc. Nasr's Academic DNA can be traced back to Sir Isaac Newton. This year Nasr finally feels like he is a true "Merican" because he now has a huge 4' by 4' red, metal, tool box. From the time he started watching tv, he saw large tool boxes in American garages and he wanted one. This one box brought a myriad of changes. He re-did the garage flooring-it is clean enough to eat on--, he re-did all the cabinets, added new cabinets, and added special wall treatments to hang his tools. When the garage door is open, you can almost hear angelic voices singing. I soon discovered there is a disease in men that I never knew existed-"garage envy." Men from the neighborhood stand in front of the house staring, drooling and sighing. Just yesterday, Nasr put a computer with a 40-inch monitor on the work bench. I was perplexed, but then I remembered he has turned our house into a smart home. He doesn't even have to come inside to control the house. The sprinklers are smart-if it rains they do not turn on, or if it is dry, they water longer. The lights turn on when asked-and can be set anywhere from 20% to 100% capacity. The thermostat regulates the temperature, and answers to voice command to warm up the house or cool it off. The speakers turn up or down and adjust to whatever level he wants, and he can merely ask Alexa for rock-n-roll songs or lullabies. On top of that, Alexa sets the timer for Nasr's coffee, salmon, and steaks. Being the professor, he is always testing and pushing the parameters of science. He asks Alexa very difficult questions. He has concluded that she knows longitude and latitude, but she is hopelessly inept with complex math equations. He will have to continue to work with Alexa to make his house a little smarter.

Virginia-loves retirement. Anyone who says they are bored in retirement are trying to be bored. As I am "new" to the San Diego area, I found a free continuing education course, called "Rediscover San Diego." I've visited the Olympic Training Stadium, the Nibble Chocolate factory where they make chocolate from scratch-as in roasting the beans. They had to stop me from jumping into the vat. We also saw the San Diego Eye Center where they provide corneas worldwide. 10% of eye problems in the US are cornea related, while 90% worldwide are cornea related. I can't stop learning! I'm writing non-fiction, fiction and everything in-between. One would think that I have endless hours to write, but the days go by so fast that have a five-month backlog on my to-do list. One reason for the backlog is we like to travel. I started the New Year with Amira-Nasr stayed home-he is allergic to the cold. But, I did manage to bundle him up and surprise him for his 70th Birthday. We headed to Alaska-just a few miles south of the Arctic Circle-to see the Northern Lights. It was 19 degrees below zero at the top of the snowy mountain. We huddled in a yurt until 3 am in the morning, watching and waiting for the Northern Lights to appear. The previous night's snow blizzard formed spectacular show shapes on the trees, so Nasr got some great pictures. I loved our trip to Italy, especially, Positano. We rented a 16th century villa that overlooked the town square and the main beach. We ate late dinners and snacks on the balcony while watching the life of the city below-includingfireworks. When I saw these beautiful villages nestled into cliffs, I never thought about how people got from the beach to the villas. There is a one-way road loaded with pedestrians, motorcycles, cars, no sidewalks, and shopkeepers pedaling their goods. The road takes longer and is too much of an obstacle course, so the answer is STEPS. Yes, steps. There are 500 steps-believe me-Icounted them from the villa to the beach. Then when you go back, there are 500 more going UP!!! When Amira and Matt asked if I minded staying upstairs to watch the girls and relax and enjoy the view while they navigated the steps for more fun, I whole heartedly said yes! Now, in Italy, one eats Pizza, Pasta, Pizza, Pasta, Pizza Pasta, GELATO!!! And, I didn't gain weight! The steps saved me.

Amira, Matthew, Siena and Jada

The highlight of the Koerner year was our trip to Rome and Positano. Amira and Matt lived the life of the rich and the famous-for one week at least. They strolled the same avenues as Denzel Washington-even tried to catch his eye, jumped into the refreshing Mediterranean waters right from the boat and bravely swam into and explored a cavernous c:ave. They lounged and sunbathed on the deck of the yacht drinking Prosecco and Limoncello. All while looking fabulous! Siena loves cats and in Italy she could spot a cat at 100 meters. Siena loves cats so much that she always wears a cat-ear headband. The ears can be sparkly, leopard, or 60's retro vinyl, it doesn't matter as long as she wears the ears. I learned

her secret. She said whenever she looks in the mirror, she doesn't look right if she doesn't have cat ears on. Yes indeed­ she was a cat in a past life!

Jada loves cats, too. She always brings her family of cats when she visits or travels. Her suitcase is filled with more cats than clothes. But she no longer has "Stinky" cat. Let me clarify that, she has the same stuffed animal that is still missing the ear and part of the tail that Jada gnawed off, but the cat no longer stinks. Why? Jada no longer chews on the poor animal, so it no longer stinks. I asked if she wanted to change Stinky's name, but she vehemently shook her head, no. Once a Stinky, Always a Stinky! Jada is an avid rock collector. She finds the prettiest rocks in Carlsbad and Positano­ which is about 100 or so each trip and she wants to take them back home with her. She is being very kind to her parents. She is not asking for pricey souvenirs. However, transporting them would cost hundreds of dollars. It is very difficult for her to pick her 5 favorites to take home. At least in Carlsbad, we have a rock garden for her. Does this mean she will take after her aunt and be a geologist?

Adam, Oanh, Olivia, Gemma,

Whenever the Grandchildren visit, Olivia is the "leader of the pack!" (Can you hear the Grease song playing?) She and Jada are inseparable even though Jada is a year older. Olivia has inherited the clean gene from Gidu and Gidu is beaming with pride. His own children never showed this gene so early. Olivia organizes the family room and the toys after they finish playing, and she helped me organize their drinking glass cabinet. Every time Gidu compliments her on it, she struts around like a peacock, so proud and happy. Let's hope it lasts into the teenage years. Both Olivia and Gemma are actresses. Some might even call them drama queens. But, these two would play in very different movies. Olivia would be in a romantic comedy. Her quick wit and silliness attests to that. In addition, she loves to model and has great modeling stances, so she would be the leading lady. Gemma, however, is all about drama. She, like her father when he was her age, heads to the most precarious and dangerous spots leaving people (grandparents) breathless until she is rescued. Also, no one can do the suffering look as well as Gemma. She slouches her shoulders, drops her head in pure rejection, and to top it off, her lips quiver. She is so believable-except to her mother, who warns me not to fall for it. Gemma deserves an Academy Award for her acting. Gemma also has a sense of humor like her sister. Nasr played the "Got Your Nose" game and then he pretended to eat it. "Did you like it?" Gemma asked. "Yes," Gidu said. "Yum." Gemma then stuck her finger in her nose, pulled out a booger and offered it to Gidu. Now, how do you say Yucky after saying Yum? If you ever want to smile, watch Gemma as she parades through the house saying, "I happy," and then repeats it over and over while flopping her head from side to side, "I happy."

Jasmine-I now have two more Grands-but they are not Grandchildren, but they are Grand-dogs! Jasmine-in **our** house-has an 11-month-old large, energetic, sweet, pretty, Husky named, Dakota. Her second charge is a three-month­ old, puppy named Juneau. Juneau is teething-meaningshe chews on everything in sight, she wants to play non-stop by jumping on Dakota, play fighting and growling-sometimes sounding a little too real. At that point Jasmine takes them outside to do the "Zoomies"-running around in circles like fools until some of their energy is out of them. Dakota and Nasr like each other. Nasr and Juneau-don't! Max, the tiny, eight-pound Fox Terrier, is so happy that Juneau is here because now Dakota leaves him alone. Not only is Jasmine raising two dogs, she continues to teach at National University in Health Care Administration. She also creates courses and curriculum for the University. She is a substitute teacher and is taking classes to complete a second master's in education. We have now become a blended family-one steeped in long time rivalry. Amira, a Bruin, graduated from UCLA, Nasr, a Bruin, is a professor at UCLA and Jasmine-(OMG!!) is getting her master's from USC. She just finished her first semester at USC, so there isn't too much Trojan blood in her yet. Let's hope we can overcome this silly divide and move on. My fingers are crossed in hope.

Maybe if we can survive this divide and I'm sure we will, the world can overcome all sorts of divisions. Maybe we should ALL be a little more like Gemma and parade around saying "I happy," and flop our heads from side to side. Maybe this would bring a little more light and happiness into the world.

Happy Holidays!

May your New Year be filled with light, joy, prosperity, and happiness!