



-I can quickly get used to that UPS, is leaving packages outside my front door and that flowering delivery cars are meandering about looking for my house. Gaily colored cards are arriving in the mail. Friends calling apologizing for not being able to partake in the Zoom celebration. But we enjoyed visiting via their phone call.

-Katarina, my oldest daughter arrived on the 8th after 2 hours' drive in the evening laden with lots of items. She made 3 trips to her car. My request for pre-birthday dinner was cheese fondue, which she made. All from scratch including white wine and kirsch as the recipe called for.

-Telephones, land line and cell phone kept ringing in pre-congratulations.

-Birthday morning as is customary in Sweden the "child" sleeps and is awoken by song, crown of flowers for his or her hair, candle, gifts, and cake. I still at my age wake up many times during the night in anticipation. Candle stick holder, cake, cloth runner on the tray all 100-year-old heirlooms.

-Calls about final preparation for family zoom call at 12 noon so that the children's 90-year-old father who is battling stage 4 Parkinson's disease could participate. With family members around the world and the technology it needed a bit of synchronizing and plans A.B. and C. The Agenda was in place for family meeting and then the friends meeting. Most guests came from around the world where being a little bit ahead of time makes a better show. So, some things couldn't be repeated.

-My heart made a jump so many times as I saw friends, I had not seen for 30 + years, my oldest friend from when I was 14 was on site with her husband in Sweden. There were friends from Cameroun now living in Ireland and Norway and the International Women's Club I started there 40 years ago in Douala. There were members from the Club I started here in New England 29 years ago. -There were friends from Washington and my time there and some friends had moved away.

There were my children's cousins, children of my late parents friends, each one introduced themselves and gave a synopsis when and how we met. Some stories I had forgotten. There were ladies in hats and gentlemen in coat and tie. People partook in their lunch hour or had to leave early to put babies to bed. My daughter and husband Stuart in Albania were pouring Moet champagne virtually as we all held our glass in our hand. Happy Birthday in English and Swedish were sung "simultaneously" from the guests around the world.

- The beautiful cake filled with blueberry marmalade made by Katarina surrounded by Swedish flags and live flowers. - Last night, alone again, in the house, I ate another piece. There were crumbs left on the Russian platter. My night friend the mouse, had consumed all morsels and left his mark, this morning. I do not mind sharing leftovers with the brown colored mouse - after all, the house is 100 + years old.

-My brother in Sweden showing an 85 year old movie of me almost newly born and my parents and other family members now gone. My son in Washington was Master of Ceremonies. Who with his gentle advice tried to get some buttons to unmute.

To each and everyone who participated either in person, via zoom, telephone, emails, Face book and in thoughts. THANK YOU, it meant a lot to me to revisit old places and times. Not one of you has aged a minute!

PS International women's Club of New England (which I founded 1992) donated \$425 to our Club's chosen charities for this year. I am very humbled to our Club's executive Board members.

In friendship and may it live for a long time.

ANNA KRISTINA SAWTELLE