

Summer of 2011

For me "summer" started this year in April. It is then that owing to a horrendously long and drawn out process to secure approval for a tax credit from OMDC, my company reached a critical point in its slide towards decline and possible demise. My workload was significantly reduced during April and May. My entire focus was directed towards the on-going OMDC saga that was only partially resolved by end of July. A long time earlier we have planned to spend all of June and some of July on a life time adventure. The stress and aggravation in dealing with the OMDC saga is a subject for another riveting story about The ineptitude of the bureaucracy and its antiquated, out of touch with reality business and management practices. On the bright side it only intensified our resolve to leave it behind or manage it remotely and off we went, first to Israel. It was intended to be a nostalgic trip going back to places that meant so much to us in our youth, places where we kindled our love and affection and that remain in our memories as some of the most romantic places in the world and places we yearned to go to but could not, like the majestic hidden city of Petra in Jordan. They were all there and the memories were refreshed. Aida on Masada was simply a magnificent bonus and Petra a dream come true. But frankly it was a tag on trip to the main adventure, tracking mountain gorillas in Uganda and Rwanda. My wife, friend, partner and lover, she is the adventurous one in our family. For years she talked about her wish to make this trip that was in all likelihood inspired by Dianne Fosse's story: Gorillas in the Mist. For all the same years I only asked one simple question: Why? I just didn't get it. This summer was the time and so we did. This was by far the most exciting, adventurous but also strenuous trip in our illustrious record of adventure trips. Africa, the poor, the beautiful and the wild as our incredible photo albums will attest. Spending time with Gorillas and Chimpanzees in the wild is a humbling though fascinating experience. It's like visiting with long lost relatives. It is also a conclusive affirmation of the evolutionary theory. Looking at them looking at you – we are related for sure. We returned to Israel where we met up with our daughter and her two daughters. For more than two weeks we, of the three generations, shared and explored for the first time most of Israel together. We all naturally concluded that Israel has no Peer in the world for its beauty its history and its sanctity. After all it is our land. Back in Toronto in mid-July when summer first emerged just as hot as we experienced in Israel and Africa. The first full family gathering reminded us of how much we missed each other and the unmatched feeling of being home together. Summer and adventures have always gone hand in hand and so in late July our matriarch cashed in on her birthday gift certificate from earlier in March and the entire family gathered in a remote airfield to watch her parachuting to earth from 13,500 feet at free fall speeds of 200 kilometers an hour. We were stunned by her courage, puzzled by her cool, calm and collected attitude and proudly admired her accomplishment. She instantly reclaimed her most admirable family member award and a parachuting certificate to boost. In a valiant attempt to regain some honorary status in the family I joined an (almost) all Italian soccer team where the only non-Italian were my two sons. As the oldest on the team and playing in goal I immediately earned the respect of the (initially skeptical) team with a number of spectacular saves worthy of a highlight reel of many professional leagues. Look at me, at 68, playing soccer at a reasonably competitive level, climbing mountains in Uganda and Rwanda tracking primates in the wild, hiking in some of Israel's most beautiful canyons and making the wondrous hike to the city of Petra. Well I could end here and boast about my prowess in a measly attempt to compete with the family stature of my wife, but one must admit to failures as well if only to maintain some humility. As a member of The Parents team I directly contributed to our team's earning last place at the annual games of the Zohar Summer Olympiad. These silly and utterly fun games pit each family in our clan with the rest competing for bragging rights and a dollar store trophy. I sank rather than swam in the aquatics; I missed the shooting target by more than is generally feasible but I had the time of my life surrounded by my loved ones. It is not yet mid-August and summer has been pretty exciting so far. What's next? Well how about moving to Israel in October as a foreign student at the University of Tel-

Aviv for the full academic year 2011/12. Crazy – perhaps to some, but not to us, we can sense that time has come to abandon the tensions and aggravations of the business world. A world no longer governed by reasonable and rational morals, ethics and practices. Our plan is beginning to form, we are getting excited. We begin the planning process in earnest. It is going to be so exciting we know. It reminds us of when we lived in Paris for six months when mother studied at the Le Cordon Bleu. But wait a minute... Where did this come from? A bit of discomfort in the chest, it'll go away nothing to it. It is me the 68 year old soccer player, hiker, climber, cool and young in heart body and mind (for the age) – Not possible. Another episode, doctor's appointment, drive to emergency, failing a stress test, back to emergency, next day Angioplasty (2 stents in the LED) and back home. There is more of summer left to go, do we really need any more excitement? Yes! We do! What a quick and effective lesson that life is as precious as it is precarious. Every day that you are alive is a good day, says my wife. If you do not embrace it to the fullest you do not live it again to regret it. This is my lesson learned, the time is right , the time is now let's go to Israel to do what we want to do, what we'll enjoy doing and what is the right thing to do at this juncture of our exciting life. Next year in Jerusalem pray all Jewish people, we may but are going to Tel-Aviv.