



“Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays
and the *Jamestown Post-Journal* on Saturdays



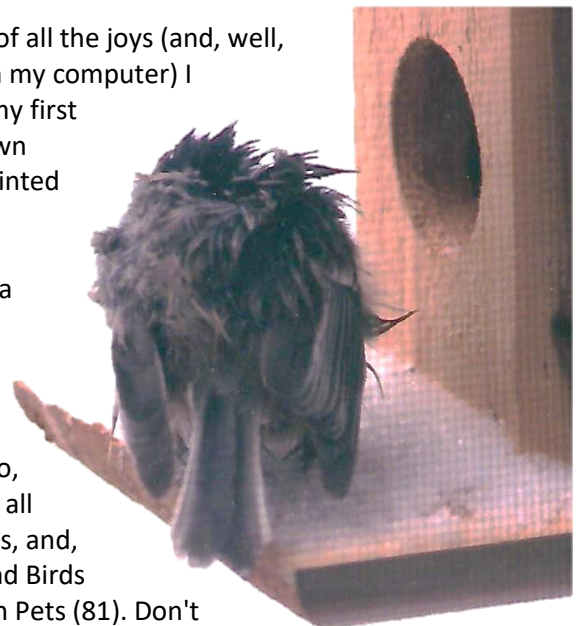
Auld Lang Syne

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To quote from the Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins: auld lang syne is a Scottish term meaning literally “old long since.” Freely translated, it means “long ago” and thus it lends itself with singular appropriateness to New Year's Eve, when we review the joys and sorrows of the past and prepare to face the challenge of the year to come. Incidentally, the last word should be pronounced as spelled (syne), not, as all too often it is, as if it were spelled “zyne.”

As I write this for the ending of 2021, I grow even more aware of all the joys (and, well, not sorrows; let's call them aggravations and those mostly with my computer) I have found in writing these Musings. The Observer published my first column (“Grown Geese Gone”) August 27, 2010, with Jamestown adding me in July 31, 2016. For a while the Post-Journal also printed my photographs which I enjoyed. The columns, still appearing weekly on my website and Facebook, will continue to include pictures. My math has grown a bit haphazard but I think that's a total of 594 columns.

Once I broke them down by categories for Animals, Self & Misc., Garden, Pets and (of course) Birds. And, yes, while I abhor wasting time, I do enjoy playing around with numbers. So, it all came out like this: Self had the most at 179 (but that's not all ego, people; it includes book reviews, calendars, all the holidays, and, honestly, anything I couldn't stick somewhere else). Animals and Birds actually tied at 145 columns each, leaving Garden (83) and then Pets (81). Don't add them up; some overlap and get counted twice. And, very honestly, I'm happy there haven't had to be more pets than I've had.



Were I to stop right now, I would be denied the opportunity to share my feelings about “Starting Fresh, the value of learning to do things you'll never do well” (isn't that a great thought?) as well as cheeses (pretty little flower), Virginia creeper (big nuisance but with lovely red leaves in the fall), counting its rings and adding local history about a tree felled in the yard, rose hips (I know so little and am eager to learn), sticker burrs (I probably know all I need to know from first-hand experience), horseradish (pretty plant too), lemon meringue pie for its day August third and even National Chocolate Chip Day. And those were just for starters! I love chatting almost as much as I love learning.

I have kept journals and diaries even since I wasn't too much beyond learning to write. Letters from camps and to old friends (I even had a pen-pal during grade school). I don't see myself as a loner but have always used the paper and pen to “talk” and to reason out any kind of serious problem. That won't stop until I do.



I easily admit to having been delighted when the papers offered to pay me for my thoughts. I was a REAL professional! Sadly, Covid apparently wiped out enough of their profits that I've been receiving nothing for a number of months now. (I read all the other columnists and wonder if they are also doing it for their own gratification and not the dollar.)

If "joy" keeps popping up that is because I found much of it through my writing and, not just a little, from your generous responses.

But there were sorrows too. I've found the beginnings of pressure to write and submit on a regular basis. Perhaps my age just figures I can be more lenient with me in the days ahead.

I'll always have challenges, certainly new ones to replace some of the old, but look forward to meeting them as well. What I also look forward to beside open time (I'll never have enough) is time to read.

So many good books and, if I'm lucky, a chance to get through the papers and magazines in a timely fashion.

Whether you're new to these columns or have followed me all along, I thank you. It's because of you that I've been doing this and I am truly gratified.

I've never taken a vacation from these in all those years I've been Musing.

Now it's time.

Written December 11, 2021

