

Last Item On The Agenda Attended to, by Leon Moss

On a cold and rainy night in December 1977 we arrived in Israel. My wife and I and 3 teenage boys: 18, 15 and 13.

My Zionist dream had come true at age 46. All the pictures and lectures and meetings and camps had prepared me for this. I was ecstatic. I'm home with my own people. No more talking about *their* army, *their* income tax system, *their* laws. From now on it's *our* army, *our* income tax system, *our* laws.

We settled in at the Absorption Center. I was walking around with a bank check of about 33,000 US dollars in my pocket. That was the take-out sum allowed in South Africa in those days. I went into a bank one day to open an account and deposit the check, now burning a hole in me, never mind my pocket.

The bank was chaos. No queues, no order, people shouting names and amounts to each other. I looked and listened, made a swift U-turn and decided to try the other bank in town. It was the same. I got used to the system, which no longer exists. I found a job, not quite what I was used to, but close to home and it kept me employed. And we found a flat in French Hill in Jerusalem.

Everything was working out. Hebrew was a problem and we made a few mistakes, laughed at them and carried on.

My mind, however, had an agenda of its own.

'You have no insurance,' it warned me. I asked around and found an ex- South African agent and bought policies for each of us.

'Your lease on the flat is only for a year.' No problem. We started looking for something else.

'It's Rosh Hashanah soon. What about shul?' I followed some people on a Shabbat and found a shul in a school nearby. Met a couple of ex-South Africans.

'You haven't a house doctor. What if you get ill?' Joined an HMO. Nearest doctor spoke only French. Problem. Solved a few years later when a South African doctor arrived.

'What if you land up in hospital?' Tried not to think about it.

It finally happened about 2 years ago. One of my worst scenarios. I had a mild event last week and was sent to hospital.

An ambulance arrived with a full crew, driver, nurse and 2 volunteers. Each of them professional and couldn't do enough to make me comfortable. Ambulance driver should learn

to handle speed bumps. Crew stayed at my side until I had been registered at the Emergency Center.

The nurse there was great and changed to speaking English when he heard my SA accent.

I was taken to a ward and checked again by the ward staff. English again. This accent is with me forever.

CT scans and x-rays. Blood tests. My blood pressure and pulse were checked 7 times in 1 day! Medicines were delivered to my bedside. Food was okay. Big accent on chicken soup, the universal medication for all illnesses. Probably developed by a start-up, right here in Israel.

Group of about 6 doctors and nurses came around twice every day. Questions and comments and debates took place at every visit. A representative from my HMO interviewed me and told me she would handle my post-hospital treatment.

I was kept there for 3 days. Each day I was visited by an Occupational Therapist, a Physiotherapist and a Neurologist. I was hooked up to a monitor so that the nurses in their station could keep an eye on me 24/7. All in all the stay in the hospital was smooth without problems or dramas. I was released on Monday with a 10 page Letter of Release, and told to report to my family doctor as soon as possible. I went to see him and left with pills and a few instructions.

Today a doctor and nurse from my HMO visited me at home and asked questions, mainly to see how and where we lived and make sure I was obeying all instructions and taking the medicines.

After lunch a physiotherapist arrived at our apartment to instruct me on an exercise routine.

Total cost to date. 0 shekels, except for small amounts for the medicines. Total spent was about \$20.

Does it get any better than this anywhere?

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Written in: 2020

A word about me:

Ann and I and 3 boys, 18, 15 and 13, arrived in Israel in December 1977. I found work in Jerusalem and we settled there. The boys all served in combat units in the army. Ann and I worked, We built a house with a large group of Olim in Ramot and moved to KfarSaba in 1998. Today Ann and I live in a retirement home in Even Yehuda.