



Vahsholtz Cousins

November, 2011

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org/>



MEMORIES

Growing Up in Kansas—1880s

by Hulda Vahsholtz Friedrich

Nemaha means “no papoose” in native lingo. Not to us Vahsholtz’. That Kansas county means the home of maybe 80 percent of our American ancestors.

The first settlements in the county were in the north end, where there was a convenient crossing of the Nemaha River called Baker’s Ford (later known as Taylor’s Rapids). That was about 1855. A decade or so later, Christian Vahsholtz moved from Chicago, using the gold he’d buried there to acquire land a couple of miles north of Taylor’s Rapids.

Nemaha County served Christian well. He prospered and raised his family there, including Hulda Vahsholtz, author of this book. Her childhood is its subject. She clearly intended to write her life story, but by the time she’d filled the 300 page journal, she’d re-counted her years only up to age 13! Did she continue her journal elsewhere at some time? We don’t know, but we’d love to have more of her writings!

Marge and I are garage salers and were fortunate enough to pick up a tattered book called *History of Nemaha*



County, pictured here. Boring.

We were considerably more fortunate to borrow from Velma Friedrich Peterson a copy of her mother’s journal, written in 1937. We’ve converted the 300 handwritten pages to the book shown at the top of the page, including Hulda’s illustrations and many more.

Her book is *not* boring. Hulda’s memory for details of life in the 1880s is simply incredible, and she writes well. A bit of a tomboy, she describes the life of a farmer just as well as that of a farmer’s wife. Mostly she tells of the challenges faced by a little girl whose brothers were too young to be much help around the place. Hulda and her sister Amanda pitched in, in more ways than one!

Hulda’s depiction of our ancestors is very frank and realistic. She lays out the real scoop on the neighbors, to the extent we decided to camouflage their

names! Some of their descendants still live in the area, and we don’t want to offend anyone. But her take on her dad, a typical crusty old German with a big, but well hidden, heart are revealing.

The 198 page trade paperback book is printed and ready for shipping. Send a check for \$13, plus \$5 shipping; \$18 total to:

Bob Vahsholtz
866 Pine View Drive
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
mvahsholtz@gmail.com

Or reserve your copy to be picked up next summer at the reunion — and save the cost of shipping!

We hope to break even on this project. If there are any profits, we’ll use them to sustain and promote the family heritage in some way. ■



Bob signs a book for 99 year-old Velma, after she signed one for him! Velma still lives alone on her mountain.



Dorothy with the book. Published in 1940, it's available online—about \$350

The Separated Island

One Summer at Martha's Vineyard

By Irma Friedrich A review by Dorothy Nowack of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

As I begin my “book report” it occurs to me as that the title is somewhat ironic. After all, time, distance, and generations have separated many in the Vahsholtz clan, yet this book has brought some of us back together.

It was during the summer of 2010 that I finally, and I mean *finally*, read this delightful book intended for juvenile audiences. My mother, Marilyn (Fredrick) Paschen, spoke fondly of her aunts, and though I never met them (or if I had, I was very young), the names Irene, Irma, and Velma were familiar. “You come from good stock,” mom used to say when talking about the accomplishments of our relatives.

Mom gave me her copy of *The Separated Island* in 2007, along with other cherished items that belonged to my grandmother Cornelia Schaaf Fredrick. I was glad to have the book because it's such an interesting family artifact and I'm sentimental about these things, but I didn't actually read it until fall of 2010. And then I devoured it! It's a delightful story, but more than that, it connected me to my great aunt whom I dearly wish I'd known.

After I read the book, I wanted to learn more about Irma, so I looked for any references I could find: reviews, copies in existence, etc. My search yielded little additional information, but it did lead me to a great treasure, because I found *The Road from Zwillip* online, and got in touch with cousins Les, Marge, and Bob. I wish I could convey my delight at finding not only an exhaustive family history, but a vibrant family community.

Back to the book, which was to be the subject of my article before I started waxing familial. *The Separated Island* describes the adventures of Parnel Manter, her little brother Thomas M., and their dog Benjy when they spend a summer at their grandparents' Chapquiddick farm, Tom's Neck.

Grandpa and Grandma Manter are the picture of warmth, bustle, love, and efficiency as they quickly settled their grandchildren into their summer home. The reader quickly understands that family roots and history run deep on Tom's Neck Farm, back to the American Revolution, even. Our heroine Parnel is named for Parnel Manter, one of the “three peas in a pod” involved in the “Liberty Pole Incident” on Martha's Vineyard some time between 1775 and 1778, in which three young girls conspired to blow up their town's symbol of independence rather than see a British sea captain commandeer it for use as a ship's masthead.

Perhaps as a foretaste of the summers' adventures, Grandpa Manter casts a spell as he tells Parnel and March (as young Thomas is called, since Grandpa is “Thomas”), about the legend of buried pirate treasure near Blue Rock.

The house and farm itself can best be described as antique: braided rugs, curving mahogany, a spinning wheel, no electricity. Everything is clean, comfortable, and tidy. Butter is churned by hand, and the farm and kitchen garden supply an array of ingredients that Grandma and Parnel transform into the delicious foods that the characters enjoy throughout the book. Farm living (and eating) is familiar to Parnel and March. Their own home farm in Kansas is

“four miles around.”

Food, in fact, plays an important role in many of the everyday and special occasions, and Irma describes in detail, and with relish, the farm-fresh treats the children, their grandparents, farm hands, and guests enjoy. “Fresh dug” potatoes are Grandpa Manter's favorite (our “Gramma” Fredrick couldn't convince me that a potato right out of the ground made a good afternoon snack, though she loved them as a child), and the children enumerate a list of vegetables and fruits as they're harvested and eaten at their peak. The children enjoy “swelegant” ice cream in town, golden blueberry muffins, coconut cupcakes, thick ham sandwiches, buttermilk, fresh bread, Grandpa's clambake.... Irma describes each meal and treat with the relish of wonderful memories involving food.

A surprising element of *The Separated Island* is the colorful cast of characters and the unique names and nicknames of some. Cousins Tid and Elizabeth are daughters of Aunt Arey. Elizabeth is a student at Vassar, a tomboy, and a whiz at technology. Artist Norwood Geiger (fictional, as far as I can learn) spends summers on the island with his cat Katherine, seasonal neighbors Mitt and Flap (Martha and Felicia) share their private beach with the Manter kids, and Mrs. Webquish is an African American widow of an American Indian who runs a little café.

All of the characters figure prominently in the children's adventures, and there is no shortage of them. Young March witnesses the birth of a calf, loses control of the farm wagon he drives for the first time when his dog Benjy spooks Dolph, the massive draft horse, the neighbor's bull gets loose, the children swim in the surf at King's Beach under Geig's watchful eye and even witness a sea plane crash into the ferry! Swimming, picnics, foraging for berries, and other excursions are carried out each day with a sense of security. The children are intelligent, capable, and sensible, and they have their grandparents' trust.

Meanwhile, farm operations con-

tinue at Tom's Neck. Hands Joe and Tim help Grandpa deliver milk and cheese, tend the garden, churn butter and more. Whenever he could, young March, who was eager to learn about farming, pitched in to help. "March, you've got the makings of a real farmer in you," said Grandpa. But Grandpa never let anyone touch his gladiolas. "They needed careful tending." Grandma guided Parnel in the culinary arts and in keep keeping the farm accounts, activities that Parnel was interested in and excelled at.

The Separated Island is filled not only with delightful action, but with artistically rendered descriptions of sights, sounds, and feelings that project the sensitive nature of the author onto

the children and their grandparents. Thomas describes the sight of pine needles murmuring to the light air as "delicious." (An adjective my own Gramma used on occasion to describe a sensation such as the scent of the night air.) "... a tide of all-embracing love swept over him and from him." In late summer, when Parnel is cutting the first gladiolas for her grandmother (with Grandpa's permission, of course), she declares "I love color!"

The story winds toward its satisfying conclusion as the children help their grandfather keep hearth and home together while Grandma recuperates from kidney stones (*that* was an unexpected dose of reality). Parnel and Thomas become entrepreneurs and successfully

raise additional funds that enable Grandpa and Grandma to remain on their beloved Tom's Neck Farm for another season.

"Time always moves leisurely up to the middle of vacation. Then when you were off guard, it began to crumble away in chunks." So like the March children, I am reluctant to let the summer go, but it's inevitable. The leaves are already beginning to change. My husband, a college music professor, is preparing for another academic year, and I'm hoping to eke out more harvests from our own garden. Thanks for reading my "book report" about *The Separated Island*. The story has opened a window for me onto my own family heritage, and I'll treasure it always. ■

You've Chosen



Colorado!

And what a great choice it is for next summer's Vahsholtz Cousins Reunion!

Why not get busy planning next summer's vacation? Those of us who have vacationed in Colorado will never forget the experience!

Old timers among us will remember that Vahsholtz Cousins Reunions go back a very long time, and they were held in Kansas—birthplace of so many family members.

Not so much these days! Our family flock has scattered to the four winds—the corners of the globe (does a globe actually *have* corners?).

Well anyway, we're all over the map, as shown in last fall's edition of this newsletter. But something like a third of us still claim Kansas as home, so it was decided—by you through a survey—that we'd stick close to Kansas this coming summer, but venture as far as Colorado.

It's going to be fun. The reunion will be in Colorado Springs, the weekend of June 22 — 24, 2012, but don't limit your visit to those dates. There are endless activities available in the area. Plan to spend a week or so if you can!

A room with two Queen beds is \$89 per night. Mention **Vahsholtz Reunion** when making your reservation. If enough show up, we get our meeting room free. For lots more information, go to www.theacademyhotel.com 8110 N. Academy Rd., Colorado Springs, phone 800-766-8524 or our own website:

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org>



Air Force Academy
 Focus on the Family
 Castle Rock Outlet Mall
 Navigators Glenn Erie Castle Tour
 Those are all free. Lots more for a few bucks.

Hosts are Ruth Klement and Mary Dillon. Mary's son Matt is even thinking of gearing up a small fishing expedition to Skagway Reservoir, where he always catches his limit.

Don't miss this reunion! ■

Pictured above is the Academy Hotel, our reunion headquarters. You may, of course, stay where you wish, but we've negotiated a great rate for this place, considering the quality of the facility and the fact that we'll be in high season for Colorado tourism.

This is a Best Western, and perhaps the snapshot Les took in the lobby (right) will further tempt you? Maybe not. We're going to the Flying W Ranch for dinner! Cost will be \$22 per adult (less for seniors and kids). Check it out at www.flyingw.com.

There's so much more to do we can't possibly cover it in this newsletter! Here's a partial list, in addition to the brochures reproduced far right:

- Garden of the Gods
- Florissant Fossil Beds
- Rock Ledge Ranch





A Memorial

A recent issue of *The Emporia Gazette* ran a feature article on a pair of Vahsholtz heroes from WWII.

Sculptor John Forsythe has created a bronze memorial to the those who served so well in that conflict. There are four panels depicting the four branches of service. Milton and Melvin Vahsholtz were models for the Army side.

That Army panel is pictured above, with Milton in his wheelchair looking on at the Flint Hills Care Center where he lives. He is the only person shown on the memorial who still survives. His twin brother Melvin died in his arms during the war in the Philippines. Melvin was a victim of a Japanese mortar attack. Milton did his best to rescue his brother but ... war is deadly.

The completed memorial is on display in Junction City (see related story on page 6).

Milton is in poor health but has never forgotten his brother and never will.

Sculptor Forsythe made a special trip to the Care Center with the bronze so that Milton could see it before it was placed in Junction City. ■

Feedback

Hello Vahsholtz Family!

I found your website on a Google search looking at old pictures of Fremont [Nebraska]. My dad, Robert Lee Hutchinson was the boy with the chicken under his hat! [April, 2010 *These Clowns are Your Relatives*] He was 16 years old.

I can't be certain, but I'll bet one of the other trumpet players was Louie Semrad and the other was Robert Olsen, son of Walter Olsen, both long-time band instructors at Fremont High School. I actually studied under both of them.

I spoke to Bob Olsen this month at the John C. Fremont Days. He had a Dixieland combo playing under the tent, and Bob still played the coronet. He is in his mid 80s. Sadly, my dad passed away in 2007 at the age of 82. Somewhere along the line, he forgot to tell me about the Clown Band. Bob Olsen remembered it well—said it was a lot of fun.

The picture in the *Fremont Tribune* was submitted by Reverend Robert Vahsholtz of Augusta, Georgia and was given to me by one of my dad's high school sweethearts! Thank you for this bit of history including my dad. Had you not sent this I would never have known about the Clown Band.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Hutchinson Mueller

Dear Allan

I'm enclosing a check to put in the Vahsholtz Cousins newsletter fund. I do so enjoy the paper and hope soon to be on e-mail.

Due to a broken neck and back, I had a computer installed in my stomach in 1997 that left me unable to use a computer. I had it removed in 2009. They will be putting an updated model in soon (it is used for pain control).

Now, when my grandfather, Frank Vahsholtz came from Germany in the later 1800s, this wasn't anything he could even have dreamed about.

Anyway, I will join the 21st century soon and let you know my email address at that time.

Thank you very much for including me and my family in your updates.

Sincerely,

Dawn Byrd

Thanks Dawn, for your kind comments and your check. We hope your new tummy computer gets the job done for you and that you soon join our email world so you get these newsletters in color!

This newsletter is a bargain. If you have an email address, it's free! If you don't, we mail it snail-mail and it still doesn't cost you anything (though mailed copies are not in color).

Such a deal! But somebody has to pay. All the work is done by volunteers, but there's printing and postage (going up again in January) to be considered. For that we depend on donations. Many postal customers are in nursing homes, have no computers and so forth. We don't expect them to pay.

Most of us though, are comfortable enough, even in these tough times. Go ahead and write a little check. Mail to:

Allan Brockmeier, Treasurer
11764 Kingston Dr.,
Festus, MO 63028

And for those who can manage to receive this via email, please *please* send your email address to mvahsholtz@gmail.com. Get your newsletter in color. Save us a buck! ■



A Monument to Our Heroes

By Geri Tate

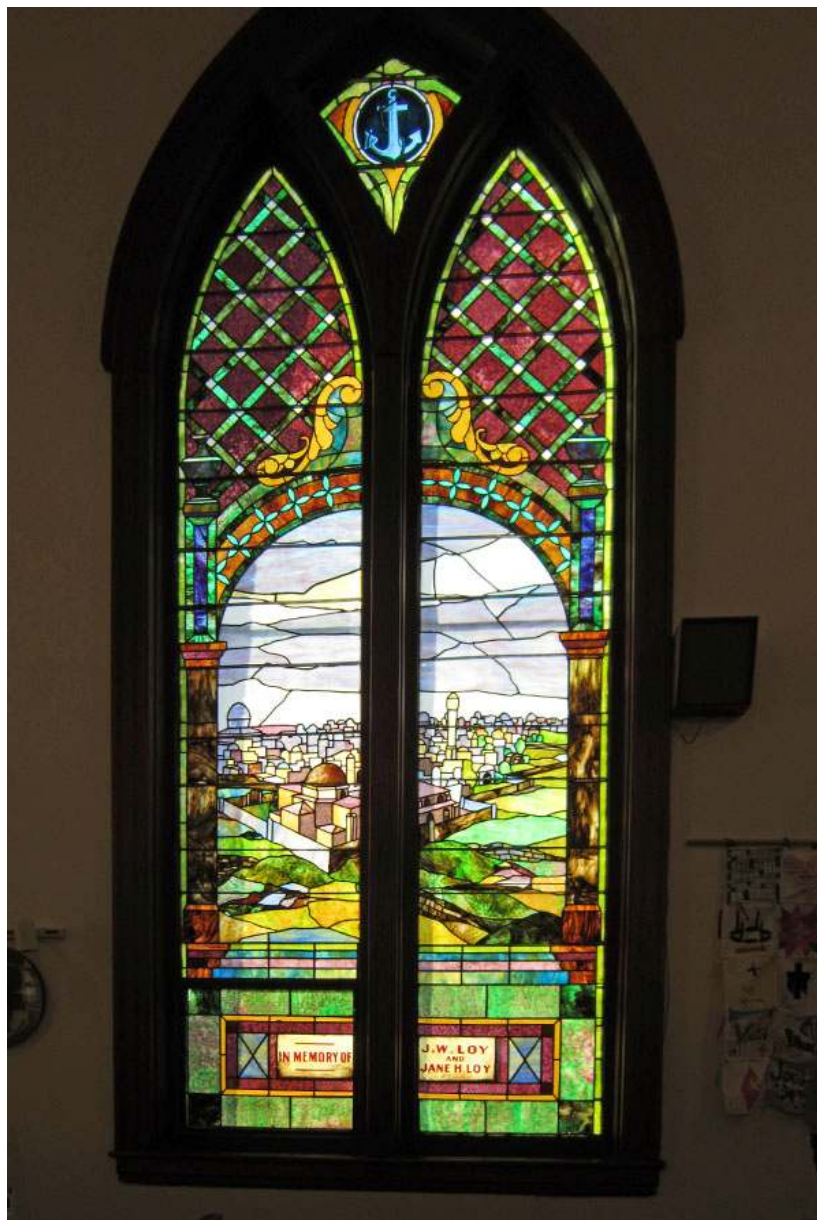
On a windy Memorial Day, May 30, 2011, Jim and I went to Junction City, Kansas to find and take some pictures of the four-sided monument representing the military service branches. One side was sculpted from a picture of Milton and Melvin Vahsholtz.

The monument is in a round-about at Exit 296 —

Washington St. off of Interstate Highway 70, across the street from the McDonalds restaurant and Howard Johnson Hotel. Any one traveling through Junction City would not have any trouble finding the monument. ■



Geri with her cousins Milton & Melvin



Many of you Vahsholtz cousins are from the Americus, Kansas area, or have been there to visit relatives. Have you been inside the Americus Methodist Church?

Ruth Richter, along with brothers Dick and Bob Vahsholtz were there recently for a funeral. Ruth saw the stained glass window pictured above and said it looks just like Israel, including the part where their daughter Ginger lives. Ginger works for the U.S. Consulate.

Here's part two of our series on Ruth and Ron's trip to Israel last year.

Richter's in Israel

Interesting Lunches, Sites to See, and the Light Show

Ron wrote earlier about having delicious lamb chops but bemoaned the fact that lambs need to have more of those little bitty chops since he didn't get enough to eat.

That was from our first night here when we went to the historic American Colony Hotel (a story in itself) and had

dinner. Since this is our daughter, Ginger's, favorite place to go for a meal, we had lunch there last Saturday sitting in the sunshine – too hot – and in the shade – a little bit cool, of the courtyard with the birds singing in the trees, lovely blooming flowers and a burbling fountain.

This is all good stuff, but I'd not be anxious for the restaurants in Garden Valley – or even in Boise – to adopt the prices they charge any time soon.

Ginger and I opted to have the business lunch which included soup or salad, the main course, dessert, and our non-alcoholic drink of choice, all for the magnificent price of \$28.00. I ordered the lamb shank since I love lamb when the chef actually knows how to prepare it, and assumed it would be a proper lady-size portion of the lamb chop as in the story previously related.

Not so, chops are small, shanks are *big!* Our jaws all dropped at this magnificent portion of meat I was being served all in a bowl by itself with my side of fried rice in another bowl. Well, it was melt in the mouth delicious, plenty to share with Ron who was begging, and enough to bring home and make another meal out of it the next day. The price is sounding better, right?

Since my two companions didn't begin to order their meal as cleverly as I did, no need to bore you with the details!

Earlier we'd taken a taxi over to see the Church of All Nations, a rather famous and well-known landmark here since multiple nations including the U. S., Canada, and Great Britain, contributed to build it in 1924. Once again, it was a rather gloomy interior, and I guess our preferences are for something more light and bright.

Right beside it is the Garden of Gethsemane. When visiting such a country as Israel, one feels a bit duty-bound to see a lot of these sites, but it's hard to know what your expectations should be. As I'm sure in Jesus' time, the Garden of Gethsemane is really just this little plot of earth which, when we saw it, happened to be all turned earth waiting for spring planting of flowers



one presumes. The olive trees however are obviously very old and the guide book indicates they likely would have been there in Jesus time.

Ginger had gotten us tickets to see the "night show" at The Citadel which is just inside the Old City and part of the city wall. We'd not gone to see the place in the daytime and she didn't tell us what "night show" meant so we innocently walked in expecting to see maybe something glitzy and colorful.

What we were treated to was truly beyond description and to understand the magnificence and reality of it, you'd have to be there. We walked in and all through the beautiful limestone, mostly in ruins, area which started out in the first century as a palace for Herod the Great. Over the years since then it's been added to as well as crumbled here and there.

So, the show began and one can only say it was the best motion picture

show depicting thousands of years of history that one is ever likely to see, all of which was displayed on the existing edifices of The Citadel which became the motion picture screen, and it was virtually like being transported back to whatever time they were representing at that moment.

There was wonderful music throbbing throughout the presentation and you could see people and animals that appeared to be actually walking through the various scenes so that from time to time I found myself trying to figure out if it was some stray tourist walking about or was it part of the presentation.

This was truly a memorable happening and one to reflect on over and over. Ron say it was like sitting on the bank of the Colorado River in the bottom of the Grand Canyon watching a motion picture on the canyon walls.

The Wine Tour

On Sunday the American Consulate had arranged a wine tour for those who wished to participate, and off we went to see these wineries with both Ron and myself being somewhat dubious about how they might actually grow grapes in what we'd seen of Israel at this point. The wineries are located in the Judean Hills and actually these come close to rivaling some of the mountains surrounding Garden Valley. The drive itself was the pleasure of the day for me.



In our big bus, we wound around narrow mountain roads looking up to higher places yet to come, and down into deep ravines. One even had a lovely, clear mountain stream running through it. The trees and foliage were mostly green and there was quite a lot of it. Ginger pointed out this is about as green as Israel is ever going to get – so enjoy it!

When we arrived at the first winery, we were met by a man who has a one-person operation going with the assistance of his wife and one helper. He's a retired film writer from Hollywood, but I would have said Jewish through and through. He went on at some length about the wine-making process as he defines it. He was definitely doing his own thing, I'd say, and not necessarily following the standard guidelines.

This was the one winery of the three we saw that doesn't make kosher wine (what should be a strenuous process). He said, "My wine isn't kosher because I choose to drive on Saturday." I find that a very funny comment but think it's not far from accurate.

We proceeded to do some serious wine tasting of about six different wines and enjoyed a lovely setup of bread, cheeses (I don't usually care that much for cheese but they have some wonderful stuff here) and the typical chopped up tomatoes and cucumbers, along with olive oil for dipping the bread. Never mind the wine-tasting, I was just enjoying the great food!

The second winery was a much grander setup – and kosher – which means it's suitable for the most orthodox Jews to use, and their eating and drinking all has to be prepared in kosher conditions. It's so kosher that a very orthodox Jewish person was with us, besides the person giving the tour, just to observe that our "unclean" hands and bodies did not touch anything – the oak barrels or the stainless steel massive containers. If we did touch anything, that lot of wine would be contaminated



and no longer acceptable.

This time we were all seated at a long table with wooden cutting boards filled with more cheeses, a big assortment of vegetables and a basket of bread to pass. We were noting that the red and yellow peppers here have this wonderful sweet taste, much sweeter and tastier than what we're used to at home.

It's a good thing we had a big bus and a driver since by now we'd sampled quite a lot of wine – and there were lots of clanking bottles of wine being loaded onto the bus by the various participants. Since it would be difficult for us to bring any wine back, not to mention we typically buy boxed wine, we weren't among the folks making big expenditures.

And on we went to the final winery which was located on a kibbutz, though we really couldn't note just what that meant.

Our winemaker guide here was probably not Jewish, but married to a Jewish woman. He had flaming red hair and a distinct accent which we later learned was because he was a South African and came from their wonderful wine region. He was a bit sacrilegious in his comments which I thought was interesting, but the main item he pointed out was that at all three wineries we'd been drinking almost exclusively only red wines – Merlot, Syrah,

Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel – with few white wines.

According to him, the Jewish people don't like white wines and are not really willing to give them a chance. Maybe because from birth, on Shabbat they always have red wine with their meal.

All this time, we had basically been circling around the edges of Jerusalem. When they refer to the "Hills of Jerusalem" they're not kidding. This is one very hilly, bordering on mountainous, city. The elevation is almost the same as where we live in

Garden Valley, Idaho; right at 3,000 feet. This means the weather at least at this time of the year is considerably cooler than it is at places like the Dead Sea which is something like 1,200 feet below sea level.

As I write this, Ron and I have had one last walk around the Old City for him as he prepares to fly out of here later this Monday evening.

We had a lovely lunch of an Israeli Breakfast, different at every café, but quite a fascinating assembly of food. Today's breakfast, costing right around \$30 for the two of us, consisted of an omelet with the works, the inevitable bowl of chopped tomatoes and cucumbers with some kind of a light dressing, a big basket of a variety of bread (which we were happy to have bagged up for us and brought back to the apartment), a big glass of our choice of juice, a hot drink also of our choice, and a tray of lovely dollops of sour cream (with a zing), cream cheese (way creamier than we get it), olives, an avocado paste, hummus, and something we didn't identify wrapped in a grape leaf, plus a slice of eggplant marinated with some kind of stuffing.

This was a lot of food and actually quite good value for the money. Remember just the cappuccino or other coffee of choice and the juice are quite costly in the U.S. I'm getting very fond of this Israeli breakfast! ■