

# The Prisament Paper

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- NY State Governor Cuomo and NYC Mayor De Blasio squabbled over whether New York City schools might be closed for the rest of the academic year.
- Bernie Sanders dropped out of the 2020 Presidential race, leaving Joe Biden as the presumptive Democratic nominee.
- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson left intensive care but remains in the hospital while he recovers from coronavirus.



## OUR FRAGILE LIVES

### A MOSCOW BOMBOGENESIS

by Rozanne Prisament

When I was 9, during the Cold War, there was the grave threat of a nuclear strike. Underground shelters were built, duck-and-cover drills practiced at school, and magazines showed how to store 5 years of food. Every time a siren blared, we ran home screaming.

On October 27, 1962, the danger was finally over! Soviet Premier Khrushchev withdrew the missiles from Cuba. We all rejoiced! When I grow up, I thought, I will go and thank him.

In 2017, Grandpa and I went to Moscow. We followed poorly- marked alleys to the Novodevichy Cemetery. Khrushchev's tombstone was leaf-strewn and overgrown-- hardly a dignified monument to a former world leader. I said a prayer and thanked him for not destroying us.

Suddenly, a violent wind erupted. Trees cracked and heavy metal waste containers were thrown into the air. We needed shelter fast! We were the last people to enter a small, overcrowded café before the door was locked. A tree crashed the car and sidewalk where we just stood. CNN called it the "worst storm in a century."

When it was over, the sun shone super brightly. Intense rays of light reflected off the shards of broken glass, nearly blinding us, as we left the cafe. Moscow had turned into a brilliant, jagged diamond amid the death and destruction! Such a surreal experience.

A few hours later, we were back in the Hilton Exec Lounge sampling vodka and eating hors oeuvres.

I survived both the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Moscow Bombogenesis—but I also survived the Aids epidemic in the West Village, 911, cancer (twice) and other tragedies. Each time, the world I inhabit changes-- or maybe it is I who change-- and become less frightened, more grateful, empathetic-- trusting more and more in Providence.

4/8/2020

## DISTANT DINNERS & CYBER SEDERS: SPRING HOLIDAYS, 2020

by Clayton Prisament

With all churches and houses of worship closed, it can be a lot harder for families to practice their beliefs. Passover and Easter are two main religious holidays that have been or will be affected by coronavirus. With churches closed all around the world many Christians tune on YouTube or other video platforms to watch mass live or recorded. With social distancing in place, kids can't go Easter egg hunting. It is also significantly more difficult now for the Easter Bunny to buy supplies for the Easter basket. Passover Seder was observed virtually by thousands of Jewish families including our family. Although it was different, it still worked. However, the holidays lose some of their festivity through the screen, and it isn't quite the same. Still, many traditions will continue, like painting the Easter eggs, or finding the afikoman (hidden matzah).

Another holiday that has been affected by coronavirus is last week's Palm Sunday. Under normal circumstances, Catholics would attend mass and receive blessed palms. Some people choose to fold them into crosses, others don't. Now with the coronavirus, masses are cancelled, and many people did not receive their palms.

Many people appreciate holidays as a time to relax and rewind or get closer in faith. With the world shut down it can be difficult. Holidays can be like a sign of hope to some or a time to get closer to family members (not physically, social distancing reminder). However, right now, all we can do is hope that this awful virus leaves the face of the earth and families can get back together.



PHOTO: RAY PRISAMENT

### Live from New York, it's Passover Night...

Like many families, the Prisaments participated in a virtual Seder for the first night of Passover this year. *More holiday photos: Page 2*

## WHY WE CAN'T GET MORE VENTILATORS BUILT TODAY

by Marc Prisament, Global Supply Chain Correspondent

In this column I will continue my discussion about supply chains and manufacturing, and delve into the problem that is in the news every night - ventilators. We know that with this virus, for the critically ill, medical grade ventilators are necessary. We also know that the experts say we may need not just thousands, but tens of thousands more. So why can't some factory just build them and send them to where they are needed? Certainly, if we needed 10,000 cell phones those could be gotten in a few days.

The answer, like many things, is not simple. First, there are two main type of ventilators. For critical care (which is what we need the most of), these machines must take over the breathing for a patient and the patient is fully intubated (i.e.: tube down their throat). For less critical patients, there is a much simpler devise that just assist one's

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## MY MOM'S TEN YEARS IN THE USA!

Interview of Catherine Prisament by Conrad Prisament



PHOTO: CATHERINE PRISAMENT  
10 Years in the US!  
Conrad and Catherine

For this edition of the Prisament Paper, I interviewed my mother who recently celebrated her 10th anniversary in America. I wanted to get her thoughts on the USA, her home country of China and, how the past decade has been. Much to my surprise some of her answers were different than I imagined. Without further ado, here is the interview:

**Conrad:** Thank you Ms. Fei for speaking with me today. How are you?

**Catherine:** I'm good. Very excited to be featured in the Prisament Paper.

**Conrad:** Congrats on being here for 10 years. What were your first impressions of New York?

**Catherine:** The people here were very friendly, and I was amazed at how much space everyone has. Wildlife and animals including deer, racoons, groundhogs, squirrels - you only see these in zoos in China were everywhere. The food portion size was so much larger than back home. I could never finish my meals when eating out.

**Conrad:** How has America changed over the past 10 years?

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## Boo!

by Elena Prisament

In times of hardship and struggle, the Prisament family turns to creativity to get through chaotic times with child-like joy and excitement. One of their most long-lasting inventions is a family game called "BOO"! Elena and Clayton Prisament came up with this exciting activity during the disastrous Hurricane Sandy, and have been playing it every Halloween night since, along with their brother Lucas. During the hurricane, there was a power outage for weeks. Throughout the lengthy blackout, people were often starved for entertainment, similarly to the current times. With no screens to watch, play, and learn with, the Prisament children decided to use flashlights to create their own games. Although BOO was originally a Halloween game, the Prisament family (including the adults!) have recently been playing it almost every night. It has been helping bring back memories, make creativity flourish, and unite the family during this coronavirus crisis.



PHOTO: EVELYN PRISAMENT

### It's not Holloween, but you can still say "Boo!"

Clayton, Lucas and Elena armed with their flashlights before a game of "Boo!" This family game, which they invented during the Hurricane Sandy blackouts, has provided hours of entertainment during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The goal of BOO is to scare as many people as you can, without getting "Boo'ed yourself. The participants begin at their bases (bedrooms) and then one by one go into the arena (living room, playroom, and kitchen). Once in the arena, they are given 5 seconds to find a hiding spot. Popular places to hide are behind the couch, behind the kitchen counter, inside the pantry, and under desks and tables. And then the action is started!

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## Birthday Zone!



April 10  
Boris Bustamante



April 6 - 90 Years!  
Barbara Rocah  
See Additional Photos,  
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On page 2: Fiction, Fun zone and more!



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MIMI ROCAH

Happy 90th Birthday to our beloved Aunt Barbara!

Don't miss Mimi's Birthday Tribute Interview with her mother, in which they discuss family, history, politics, and much else.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBgTZUh8vr4>

WHY WE CAN'T GET MORE VENTILATORS BUILT TODAY

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breathing through a mask, and we do have a lot more of these.

Besides the breathing mechanism built into the machine, there are regulators, specialized tubing, pressure gauges/valves and sophisticated software required to make it work. Settings vary widely depending on the patient type and severity. Critical care ventilators, which also need FDA certification, are built by about 6-8 companies world-wide and built to order, often with lead times of months (not weeks). They can cost \$25k to \$50K each depending on the model, so these are truly complex devices.

In normal times, even a large hospital system like NYP would have 300-400 of these and should they require more units, a limited number were available from local rental companies. Also, most ICU patients are only on the vents for a week, where we are now seeing Covid-19 patients on for several weeks. With so many Covid-19 patients, there is an increase in demand probably 20-30 times normal.

Going back to my initial premise, so how do we get more of these, I know hospitals are finding as many units as they can and making sure every unit they do have (a newer or older model) is in working order. I also know they are looking at using anesthesia machines as ventilators and taking all available machines from outpatient areas that are now closed.

I know too that all the existing manufacturers of critical care vents are working overtime and extra shifts to build as much as they can, but as I mentioned it takes time. If you recall in my earlier article, most manufacturers operate on a "Just-In-Time" basis, with parts coming from all over the world, so even if they work more shifts, they may not have the parts to build more units. Without the custom designed parts needed, they are limited to increase production significantly, at least in the short-term.

The other question being raised is why can't we force a company like GM or Ford to build these right away? Again, as competent as they may be at building cars, this is a totally different and new devise for them. They must work with someone else to obtain a design that is certified and works correctly. Then they must order the cabinetry and pc boards and all the components for those boards. Final assembly is not an automated process and requires individuals skilled in small bench electronic devises. Finally, each unit requires burn-in and testing prior to shipment. Even once these get to the hospital, someone (not Ford or GM) must train staff and Bio-Engineering techs how to properly use and maintain these.

Please don't take my concerns as negative, or that I don't think building more ventilators is possible. However, anyone who understands manufacturing and supply chain restraints would appreciate that this is not an easy task. I am optimistic that despite the problems listed, we will increase supply over time and figure out other creative ways to deal with this pandemic and to save as many lives as possible.

Boo!

From Page 1 ...

It takes some time to set up for the game, but Elena, Clayton and Lucas do it diligently and efficiently. First of all, the arena must be cleaned. In a few minutes, the children have the floor spotless and the arena is cleared of any toys that might get in the way. "It's amazing how quickly they manage to clean up," Evelyn Prisament, mother to Elena, Clayton and Lucas, exclaims. "It usually takes a while to clean up a single room, but when we play BOO, the children have the entire house cleared in moments!" Next, some hiding spots require being set up. Chairs are moved, walls are built with building blocks, and a pillow is used to guard against sharp corners so that no one will get hurt. Finally, all the lights in the house except for one small light in the basement are turned off. The flashlights come on to lead the way, everyone heads to their respective bases, and the game begins!

A new addition to the already thrilling game are coin-sized, square objects called tokens. These tokens each represent a special ability or power. Each token can only be used once in a game. At the very beginning, depending on how many people are playing, the contestants choose 2 - 5 tokens - in secret! - to use. Some popular tokens include the double token (have to get "boo'ed twice in order to get out!), the whisper token (for stealth - makes somebody unable to give away your hiding spot), and the lock token (player of choice must stay in place for 10 seconds). There are 15 different tokens in total.

"BOO brings laughter and lightheartedness to these very unusual times," Raymond Prisament, father to the children, says. Elena, Clayton and Lucas encourage people to use their creativity in order to find and bring out the good in these difficult times!



PHOTOS: EVELYN PRISAMENT

Choose wisely or you'll get BOO'ed

Top: Each player chooses 5 tokens that provide special powers in the game.  
Bottom: Elena and Clayton strategize while choosing their loadouts.

CHAIN STORY - INSTALLMENT 3

Continued by Ray Prisament

I arrived back at Jamison & Co. Studio Apartments and took off my shoes and backpack without looking at either. I placed the envelope on the table.

A drink, I decided, could help me process whatever I was about to read. Yeah - it would. I tore open the envelope anyway.

The F train had been rush-hour crowded at 3pm. From overheard chatter, I gathered that my office was not the only one emptied out in some weird kind of fire drill. An agoraphobe with a subway commute, I knew how to handle the crowd: eyes closed, deep breaths, thinking. Too bad. Because while thinking, some cursed synapse in my prefrontal cortex made a connection with the word acorn on the envelope, and I did not like the connection it made. I did not like it at all.

The letter was typewritten. Serif font, clean, not cut from newspaper clippings like the ransom letters in movies. No signature, of course.

"Dear Acorn: If you are reading this, it means the \$20,000 checks have stopped arriving, and the Phase I evacuations have begun."

Some people pinch themselves, but I prefer the method of pressing a finger in the palm of your other hand. In a dream, the finger will slip through. My palm held firm.

"The important thing is for you not to be worried about Phase II. Who do you think has been sending you those checks each July? Your mother died and your father left you. But you are not an orphan."

To be continued ... by YOU



PHOTOS EVELYN AND RAY PRISAMENT

A Socially-Distant Palm Sunday Dinner  
Clayton demonstrates six feet using his body, while the Grandparents dine from a safe distance, in this crazy new world.

MY MOM'S TEN YEARS IN THE USA!

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**Catherine:** In Dobbs Ferry, the change has been huge. When I arrived a decade ago, it was a ghost town. No one was out or about. Now, during rush-hour, it's like Midtown Manhattan. It is much easier for Asians to get the food we crave due to both the Scarsdale and Yonker's HMART. Before that, I had to go to Flushing to find certain vegetables and meats.

**Conrad:** What do you miss most about China?

**Catherine:** Food! Authentic, not American Chinese food! The bakeries are so much better in Shanghai. The deserts are less sweet and tastier. I also miss my parents, friends and extended family. I miss the convenience of being in a major city like Shanghai with incredible public transportation. It is so modern there now with cashless payments everywhere, it's like the future.

**Conrad:** How do you keep in touch with your friends and family from back home?

**Catherine:** WeChat, the Chinese super APP. I talk with my parents daily and friends on a regular basis. It makes me feel less homesick.

**Conrad:** Overall, how would you rate the past decade in the USA?

**Catherine:** I'm thrilled to be a mother to wonderful Conrad. I had a great job with the College Board for many years where I learned so much and it helped to lay the foundation for Sinoized Education. I love the blue sky and fresh air. I'm still not used to the fact that Americans love talking about politics, this never happens in China. I learned a lot about both Catholic and Jewish customs which were completely foreign to me. I Overall, I'm a very adaptable person, having previously lived also in the UK for two years. I view America as a home now and I'm glad Conrad can be exposed to two very different cultures.

Solution to last week's crossword

We apologize for a few publication mistakes in last week's "Elements" crossword:

- 10 Across needed to have 6 letters ("Atomic")
- The clue to 6 across was supposed to be: "Its atomic number is 73"
- But, the answer to 6 across should be spelled "Tantalum" with a u as the penultimate letter.

Our puzzle-maker will offer a full refund to any dissatisfied reader :-)



SUDOKU CHALLENGE

by Lucas Prisament

	4							
				1	5		6	2
2			3					
				4		5		
		7	2		8	9		
	5	1		6		3		
		8			9	6		
			5	7				8
		4						

Fill in the blanks such that:

- Every Row
- Every Column
- Every Square

Has the numbers 1- 9 exactly once.