



Teddy Bears

My memories of the remarkable events from the past decades

1) Albertine Pommier (68 years old) :

- The murder of J.F. Kennedy

On the 22th of November 1963 I assisted on live the murder of J.F Kennedy while watching my television. It was a huge emotional choc. A friend of mine, with whom I discussed recently and who belongs to the same generation as I, remembers having seen the same moment in television. And we did not know each other's at this time. This unfortunate historical moment made us think about other similar and violent memories: Martin Luther King was assassinated on the 4th of April 1968 for having fought segregation and Itzhak Rabin on the 4th of November 1995 was murdered for having worked for peace between the Israelites and Palestinians.

- First Personal Macintosh

In 1984, I discover a unexpected surprise at my friend's place; the first personal Macintosh computer 128K that was a big plastic block with a "mouse". This "mouse" is a magical animal. This tool will change our professional lives. And in the same year, the our cooking methods are revolutionized with the micro waves that comes a popular kitchen machine in the French households about the years after the American households. During the years starting from that moment, the technological revolutions succeed one another: computers, laptops and mobile phones. Today, the young generations are familiar with e-mails, text messages and digital skills since their early childhood. For us, seniors, these are discoveries that we did during the age of 40. And I don't even talk about checking the weather with the use of satellites and GPS...

2) Betty (82 years old)

- Woodstock

I was living about twenty miles from Woodstock at the time of the festival. I thought about going to it but I had two small children four and one years old. I knew many people who went to the festival or lived in Woodstock itself. Of course the festival was outside the village on a piece of farmland. This piece of land was like a garbage dump after the festival as there was inadequate services on the site i.e. toilets, water for showers, medical staff, and garbage cans. The most interesting thing I heard was from a young doctor who was on site. He said several babies were born, lots of drugs used, exposure to the elements including rain and mud causing respiratory problems, etc. Our local newspapers were full of commentary mostly about prevent another event of this nature in their community. Bob Dylan was living in Woodstock on a



mountain with security all around it. Occasionally he ventured out but normally stayed on his property. I knew several people who knew him.

- Elton John

My husband was on assignment in England for IBM. He had some spare time so decided to go to Southampton and found a local concert. He returned to the Hudson Valley of New York and started explaining to our teenage daughters what he had seen - a good piano player who kept changing his glasses and wore funny clothing. They were not paying much attention but asked the musician's name and he said it was something strange like el ton john. They screamed and said that 's not fair daddy. You didn't even know who you were seeing!

- The King

Elvis Presley started to be known when I was rather young. I liked his voice but found his gestures a bit vulgar so I listened to him on television but did not watch the images!

- Mitterand's election

I was in France when Mitterand was elected. About a month after many French families I knew were panicking as there was talk about currency controls limiting the amount that you could take out of France. Thereafter I kept receipts of any amount that I brought into France so I would retain the right to take it back out in case these controls ever happened again.

- Fall of the Berlin Wall

I was director of housing at the American University of Paris when word was received by the students compiling the local paper that the wall was falling. They started to scream and plan and shortly two or more cars took off as they said they had to do first hand reporting and they did.

- The murder of JFK

I was serving as foreign student advisor at Michigan State University when it was announced on the radio that Kennedy had been shot. I continued to work and listen to the radio but my staff was crying and I soon realized no work would be done so I sent them home. Kennedy had come to Michigan State during his campaign for office and I had seen him up close then. I was upset but not as much as others around me.

3) Diana (72 years old)

- First step on the moon

I was in San Francisco and Marin County with Froggy and Bernard, 2 French friends, at Ginny's place. We tended to believe what was broadcast.



- Inauguration of the National Library (Bibliothèque François Mitterrand)

4 open-book towers with books above and researchers below in the basement. The wind is often strong enough to blow out your umbrella. There have been leaks and maintenance challenges including flooding (hope the Seine river never rises too much) damaging thousands of books that had to be dried out. There are many old manuscript treasures and an intricate system of moving books from in the basement to loftier levels. You need a special card to do research and reserve a seat but can request publications to consult. The 13e *arrondissement* has continued to transform from a residential/university quartier to a more lively commercial and cultural center no doubt due in part to the BN Francois Mitterrand. The Josephine Baker floating swimming pool sank soon after it opened but the Simone de Beauvoir bridge is still standing! As my apartment is up the hill by the Olympiades (driverless Line 14) and my job near the Quai, I often rode my bike or walked by the construction zone. I have attended an independent film festival and many screening or exhibits there and I am a regularly going to movies at the MK2.