

## SEEKING HAPPINESS

*By Mike Harris*

This is my third high holiday "Rosh Hashanah" in Denver. In the two and half years since I made the decision to choose a new location to follow my basic credo in life "Pursue Happiness" Denver has let me down.

The first Rosh Hashanah, things were new and I was ecstatic feeling that I had made a wonderful choice. It was so different from where I came from, that I ignored minor nudges and went with the flow.

The second Rosh Hashanah, I had fallen into such a morass that I could not think straight, I felt I was fighting for my life. Four surgeries and I had gone from a healthy no medications individual to fighting to survive. This second Rosh Hashanah I was looking for someone to blame. My father's teaching came forward, "Before you compound a mistake look into a mirror." The man I saw stopped me in my tracks, there was the one at fault. Denver was so different that I was lulled into ignoring all the teachings that served me admirably for all my life. My street education which made it possible to survive a war, become a young man with a skilled occupation earning an inordinate salary was to blame. He was not paying attention to the nudges of his street education. Street was saying going with the flow was hazardous. A.A.R.P. was not a philanthropic organization, they were using lazy older people and were making a profit in the process. The representative that was signing me up was getting a commission. The fact that my Pennsylvania HMO did not cover me in Colorado was pressuring that I find an HMO for Colorado coverage. The representative was signing me up with a recommended HMO by A.A.R.P. who was probably getting a fee, as was the lady from A.A.R.P.

At the time Denver was so different from New York and Philadelphia that I kept saying, "Not here, the people are so laid back, so polite, forget it, streets." The biggest mistake I could possibly make! There are good and bad people everywhere. So the man in the mirror was to blame.

How to fix the situation? First stop and think. A different HMO. With some diligent checking I found a better HMO, was assigned a primary physician who seemed to be more interested in my well-being. He ordered tests to update the records I had brought with me from Pennsylvania and so I began to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Unfortunately I had an accident, fell and broke a hip. The care of the new HMO has been superb, and I made a limited recovery.

Now this is my third time in Denver with the High Holidays and I still have not joined a congregation. During these days of contemplation from the New Year to Yom Kippur I have been doing what I have done all my life since I was thirteen. During these days of awe, in the privacy of my dwelling, since I am not affiliated with a congregation, I have been taking stock of my actions of the past year, and I find that my shortcomings need addressing. I am not happy,

only I am to blame. God can forgive me for lapses against Him, but only man can forgive lapses against man. I talk to my Maker and promise to do better in this coming New Year. Because I really believe that my God is just and merciful I feel better and will try very hard to earn his consideration. However the lapses against fellow man can only be forgiven by man. So here in public I declare, "If in any way I have knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, hurt or offended anyone I ask that you to forgive me and I will endeavor to remedy my actions in the coming year.