

something I might find useful – especially with Boston’s cold weather putting my coat to a real test!

After dinner and bidding farewell, I returned to my room to lose three Scrabble games to the very talented Adam (who, seven months later, won \$25,000 for first place in the North American Scrabble Championships!). Then, I went to sleep to get an early start to the next day, reunited with my boss.

I turned on the TV news first thing after rising – to see an amazing story unfolding: a fire at the Polartec-manufacturing facility, Malden Mills!

Here are some details of the fire from a newspaper report I found on the internet. Take note of the cause and the time, which I’ve **bolded**:

“Seven hundred people were at work in the factory when, **at a little past 8:00 p.m., a boiler exploded in one of the mill buildings.** The explosion was so powerful that it ruptured gas mains; fire quickly engulfed the buildings. Employees fled into the streets; 33 were injured, four of them critically.”

Eerie, right? The cause was an industrial accident; I’m confident that Felix had NOTHING to do with it.

The Malden Mills story made national news because the owner, Aaron Feuerstein, made every effort to continue to pay wages and protect the pensions despite the utter destruction of the factory. He was dubbed the “Mensch of Malden Mills” on CBS’s *60 Minutes* for his righteous actions. Unfortunately, even though it cost him \$25,000,000 to keep his employees on the payroll, ultimately he was unable to resuscitate the business. Feuerstein declared bankruptcy in 2001.

So that was going to be the end of this article, but I’ll add one more coincidence. While I decided to research and tell this story – 26 years after the event -- for this December 2021 issue, I learned an odd fact: Aaron Feuerstein is no longer living.

That’s NOT so remarkable, of course; he’d be 95 years old if he were still alive.

What does seem a bit remarkable is that Aaron died **just last month** – November 4th, 2021. I was not previously aware of his passing, so my decision to write up the story this month seems like another eerie coincidence!

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recognition, allowing you to write something in a hurry and have the Newton turn it into easier-to-read text. The problem with this feature was the fact that the Newton was quite bad at recognizing text from handwriting. It would often create typos or wrong messages. It was mocked as a joke, and it never recovered.



From both of us at the Bowfin Inquirer



“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.”
– Benjamin Franklin