Conversations
A Variety of Letters, Emails, Texts, & Sundry Odd ‘n Ends

MICHAEL J. HOLSHOUSER
Conversations
A Variety of Letters, Emails, Texts, & Sundry Odd ‘n Ends
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Breadcrumbs: Conversations
Bits and Pieces from a Dream of Time
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Pronunciation: Holtzhowzer

All have the express written encouragement
To distribute this creation freely to any and all
Who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear
The mystery in which each and every one
Equally participates in so many ways.
PREFACE

This is a collection of letters, emails, texts, and other correspondence with a variety of friends, acquaintances, strangers, and sundry others through the years since 1989 when these writings began to come to mind. No specific dates, no specific order, to give a sense of Billy Pilgrim timelessness this so-it-goes existence has become.


Enjoy,

M
A hodgepodge of banterings with Len Howard of Henderson, Nevada, during our online relationship that began through Facebook in 2012. Not in any particular order. He several times commented on how much I’d written, and that he was surprised that I wasn’t better known, to which my answer is a better-someone-else-than-me so it goes.

Facebook: Len Howard
https://www.facebook.com/lenhoward36

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Hey, hey, Len,

Thought I'd touch bases and see how things are going these daze. You seem to be hanging pretty regularly online. Still, hopefully, in reasonable health for the sand still wafting away in the hourglass.

As you implied in one of your comments, I've been on the non-caring side of things as far as all things wordy goes. Been a lot more quiet in a good portion of the daily wander. More and more into the Ramana Maharshi approach to the mystery of it all. Writing down all the ditties that have come to mind these last twenty-plus years has been great fun, but there has definitely always been an ebb and flow to the interest level. As Lao Tzu said, "A strong wind does not blow all morning." And right now, this wind is very definitely in low-ebb mode.

Most everything I've written has been posted in one online zone or another. Finally getting down to the dregs in the transcription/editing process. Only four or five hundred pages to go, and relatively few new ditties pumping out in any given day. So, if it has any value to the future – which I think we both agree is not going to be very pretty; certainly not a world to which I'd want to return – I leave it to others to pass it on, or not.

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All I can say is I certainly didn't seek this out. Pretty amazing considering that I didn't even come from a religious background, or any reason to believe or not believe in anything. Quite content from the get-go just to be. Just a small town farm kid with an orchard out back and a canal across the street. Things just sort of happened – an endless series of adventures here and there that streamed to further adventures there and here – and the words just sort started coming, and kept coming, and keep coming. And believe me, I am in as much awe as you.

Nice being anonymous, though. The thought of being known wherever I go, of being onstage chatting it up with the crowd, or having to put out some polished package, or accidently create some dogma, would be even more bother than it already is. Fortunately, there are plenty of very insightful people out there who are far more eager than I to do such things. Me, I get to sit in coffee shops and bars, walk beaches, valleys, mountains, city streets, and run occasionally, randomly, into unsuspecting strangers who have eyes to see and ears to hear an anonymous stranger. And then I wander on, still anonymous. It isn't about me. Perfect.

And as far as this body goes, I'm just getting underway in the fourth quarter, and it don't look pretty. My Mom has had several eye operations for cataracts and glaucoma. She's 85, hasn't done much harm to her body, and has good insurance. Me, I ain't got nothing but a decent toss in the genetic lottery. Had one of those radial keratotomies back in the 90's that's gradually going
south. The knee is wobbly from a foolish slip off a curb, and the rest of the body is snap-crackle-popping its way to oblivion. The time of time of consequences is underway. Waaaah!

When I think about how things have happened in this life, much of it is because I had no big agenda, no definite calling. Came from unambitious, humble peasant stock – farmers, preacher and teachers is how I've heard us called – and there was nothing I desperately wanted or needed out of life. Everything has generally always come or happened of its own accord, and I tried very hard to participate as fully as possible in what I now call a touchy-feely three-dimensional dream. Though I attempted many times to foster one ambitious mode or another, generally the path of least resistance has been the one most often taken. Accepting whatever was offered or suggested or came to mind if it was at all interesting. Moving on whenever I was done with it, or picking myself up, dusting off and finding another horse if it had tossed me about, which many an adventure has. Nothing really spectacular or extraordinary or at all magical, just an natural-born aimless, relatively anonymous wanderer who somehow, through the quirk of all things mystery, gradually, without fanfare, began the long and winding journey within. If I was young and met myself now, there would likely not be a hint of recognition.

"Woke up again this morning" and "Well enough" are among the pat answers to "How's it going?" these daze.

I figure the final and biggest challenge in life is being content with however it's played out. Looking back it certainly seems like many, many lives were packed into just this one. The rolodex of memories is beyond counting, even with all the ones that have been lost, or so faded as to leave me unsure whether or not they even happened.

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No worries. There's so much out there already, so whatever you pass on is good enough. As I've said before, I don't have much ambition for playing the marketing game, so probably the only way it's going to get dispersed is through you and a few others who've found it interesting.

Am slowly fiddling with putting together another book using a good-sized chunk of the 600-page monster I sent you a few weeks ago. Lots of editing to be done, and new stuff still dribbling out daily. It'll probably start off being a downloadable PDF posted on my website and Facebook page like I did with "The Stillness Before Time." Would probably self-publish it through Lulu.com to sell on Amazon.com and other online booksellers once I get it all formatted good and proper.

Eventually, if I last so long, I'll put the whole 3,000-plus page compendium on the Return to Wonder blog for time to do with it what it will. About a thousand pages is already posted in ten-page chapters, though I wouldn't mind re-editing it, too.

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Lots more to do before the worms get me, that's for sure. A quiet little hobby while there's breath to do it.

Enjoy the weekend.
Ciao, ciao,

M

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Women are indeed amazing creatures. Often joke about thanking god every day that I was born a man. Many are called, but only half of us are chosen in this genetic lottery. Ergo, beauty parlors, malls, and two-story, five-bedroom mortgage pits. Have attempted a variety of relationships – some of them quite torturous – but never really had a strong call to play out the domesticated life. Women confine you with their many security-oriented limitations is how I've come to see it. No way could I have lived the life I have with a female, kids, a house, and a nine-to-five in tow. Love ’em, but only occasionally, and from a distance.

My approach to existence – without ever having planned it – seems to have been to eat, drink and be merry until it no longer owned me. A drink-wine-eat-chocolate-until-you-puke philosophy. A narcissistic hedonist – as I think we all are, I should note – I did everything, bought everything, imbibed everything, and grabbed for the next vine when I was done. No bucket list because I just did whatever occurred to me to want to do. Free will looking forward, fate looking back.

Heavens and hells or reincarnation or oblivion, I wouldn't really pretend to know – agnostic is the only honest answer in my thinking – though I am inclined to predict it is the latter, that the essence is immortal, but this form is just a one-shot deal. Didn't ask to be here, ain't praying to be staying is my glib answer to it anymore. But if I was offered a return ticket to this theater of the absurd, the only thing I might consider would be to be a sailor capable of going solo around the world, but only after making enough money as a professional hunter-seeker middle linebacker to buy the boat. Mercenary, assassin, and/or spy might also be enticing.

Above, you talked of feeling like a sham at times, but I frankly could say the same. This mystery we're exploring leaves us all somewhat schizophrenic is my thinking, We all get splinters from straddling the fence in our trial-by-fuck-up lives. From what you've shared of your existence, I think you've done some amazing things. You've witnessed all sorts of interesting people, played out all sorts of adventures, enjoyed a fulfilling relationship, and your postings reflect a great deal of insight about it all, so I certainly wouldn't say you've anything to feel a lesser buddha about.

As for my writings being known, it all seems so passé anymore. So many have already said so much, and many much more eloquently. The world at this point is so full of babble that relatively few are inclined to look up from their dumb phones to hear anything true. Perhaps all my jabber only proves how earthbound I am. Consider myself more a peon scribe playing out the Johnny Appleseed template than any full-on buddha. Amusing myself by toying with history, mirage that it is. Have given away hundreds, perhaps thousands of copies of the original work, and everything will be available for free online if I don't get snuffed out before wrapping things up. Relatively anonymous, no followers, no group, and hardly anyone knows anyone else, so the potential for dogma is minimized. Yes, I am very much a part and particle of this very laughable nothing-new-under-the-sun absurdity.
I read "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" eight times in ten to fifteen years during the twenties and thirties, and each time it was a new book with parts I had absolutely no recollection reading anytime prior. An amazing, brilliant work by my reckoning. It has often been in my thoughts in the years since. Took it with me on a flight across the country a couple weeks ago, and enjoyed just doing the ye old open-it-up-anywhere-and-start-reading mode. I've decided it's one of my travel books for the foreseeable future. Am not sure why I never sparked with "Lila," but I probably should sit down and give it another go, too.

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They just keep drip-drip-drip coming. All online in one place or another at this writing, to what I-know-not-care-not end only time will tell.

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Regarding “The Stillness Before Time” book published by Lulu:

Lulu: The Stillness Before Time

Hah! It's been out I'm not sure how many years now, and I'm still anonymous (Thank GOD) and less than $40 richer. Fortunately, it ain't about the money, or the notoriety. I just like writing and putting together little projects that come to mind. Can't even imagine how many thousands of hours I've spent on it all. What we do with our lives.

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Feel free to share anything you like. I'm not looking to ever make any money on anything I've written. Just tossing it out into the vapor to whatever end.

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I've been told by a few publishers, including Ram Dass's, that this sort of aphoristic thing doesn't really sell well. And me a total unknown to boot. But if you think your sister-in-law might see it differently, I say send it to her. There's over twenty years worth in the hopper if anybody's interested in tapping into it.

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It's a sad truth that a good dollop of cynicism always cheers me anymore.

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It's a curious thing how seemingly every heterosexual man in the world – me included, of course – has it in their head that they are god's gift to women. It's almost embarrassing anymore to go out to a bar scene, or even a coffee shop, and watch even the greying, fat, bald, and toothless ones playing out their fantasies on the sweet young things, to whom – unless power, fame and fortune are in the mix – they are all but invisible. Life is harsh, boys, get over it.

It's actually something of a relief to be done with the insanity of the brain below the belt line. Put myself in way too many more than foolish situations with some real characters, to put it nicely, and shudder to think what would have happened if the Apollo had ever landed.

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I've been back in the home zone since 2000 so that I could help the parents through their endgame. Dad passed in February last year, and Mom is still going strong. I've been blessed, I can assure you.

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It's that state of mind thing. The dark side only touches you if you let it. But it is interesting to witness the whole show. I have many times wandered Walmarts and other nighttime resorts just to watch the minions of the night. One of my favorite jobs was a six-to-six taxi driver shift up in Chico back in the 90's. A lot of interesting characters out there in the wee hours. No doubt a pretty safe stint compared to one in New York City, but there were a few iffy rides, to be sure. Made it to age fifty-eight, so I'm feeling pretty good about things.

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As for the future of our kind and the world, this is something I wrote recently to an old girlfriend:

I figure the human drama will just continue to get more and more absurd. My guess is that you and I will probably be out of here long before it really hits the wall. Humankind is a cancer that the world, irrevocably changed on its face, will passively abide until we hit the edge of sustainability. Oil is still the most significant factor in my mind, and to keep it flowing at the pace it is, we will will do anything and everything possible to tap whatever's left. So who can even begin to accurately predict when what I call the Great Fall will actually come. Malthus was no doubt ultimately right, it's just that our genius at tool-making has thus far always been able to expand the limits, and keep that dike from bursting.

But the apex of what the world offered our plundering nature is undoubtedly behind us, and the human paradigm will at some point, quickly, steeply, harshly decline. I suspect the pandemic so many fear will just be good old starvation. Every dystopian scenario imaginable will likely play out somewhere across the planet. Those who survive, if any do – impossible to be sure mammalian life will even make it with all we've done and are doing to change the balance – will wander the ruins scavenging in whatever way the given geography allows. Those who currently live as their ancestors did, or quickly rediscover how to work with whatever nature still allows, will persist far longer than those clustered in what we so vainly call civil-ization. Whatever happens, it won't be pretty anywhere is my suspicion.

This is a book I read back in the college years

Earth Abides
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Abides

And from it the Ecclesiastes 1:4 quote: Men go and come, but Earth abides.

Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-apocalyptic

Wikipedia: Thomas Robert Malthus
Not sure what your views on the endgame are, or what you will be open to enduring before you get out of here, but this is a link to a variety of Final Exit articles that I have posted on my Facebook page. My little Kevorkian bit.

Final Exit and Related Links

My preference is completely alone at midnight with a helium tank, or my Colt Python with a weight tied to an ankle at the deep end of a pool or lake ... High on something very nirvanic, after a most excellent steak and lobster dinner, a high caliber bottle of Zin, and several shots of something fine whiskey. I aim to be as close to immortality as mortality allows, unless, of course, the seatbelt won't unbuckle and the flames get to me first, in which case, as Bokonon (a.k.a. Kurt Vonnegut) wrote in Cat's Cradle: "Expect a very human performance."

I do appreciate your passing it on. Guess I call it babble because I've been writing down pretty much everything that comes into mind for the last twenty-plus years. Spend a few hours of most days transcribing and editing, and at this point it all seems sort of enjoyably ho-hum. There are well over three thousand pages worth on the computer at this writing, and several more ditties as I call them often percolate onto paper on any given day. A lot of it is just wordplay as far as I'm concerned, but there are, as you've seen, a fair share of thought-provokers in there, as well.

Haven't quite figured out what to do with it all other than to give it away. This sort of thing isn't especially marketable according to any publishers who've gotten back to me. It's not Harry Potter, I always say. And as I'm a relatively anonymous character by default, it would be very challenging to make a traveling salvation show out of it. Beside which, there are so many high-powered, slick marketing machines out there already, that anything I have to say would be redundant and much less polished.

So it's become more of a pleasant hobby than anything else. I just post some of it on my home-brewed website, a couple Facebook pages, a few blogs, and then head out for long wanders with index cards and pen in tow.

If you're interested, I'll shoot you a PDF copy of the almost six hundred pages that have bubbled up the last couple years. There's still a lot of editing to do, but you'll be welcome to take a look at it and share anything you like.
I didn't date much in high school. Less than a handful of times, actually. Too shy at the time. The first time I partied with the peers was graduation night in '72 on our little small town main street. I was the first date for one who recently contacted me on Facebook. She evidently had quite the crush on me, to which I, of course, was quite oblivious. Told her she was lucky to have met the guy she did. I would have never worked with me. She was a staunch Christian and never left Hughson. Raised three kids, and is as pleasantly parochial as you could imagine.

Anywho, this is what I wrote her when she asked if I'd ever considered marrying and having children:

At some point in the late twenties, I kinda-sorta of thought to myself that if I met someone who I really liked, and they wanted children, I might consider venturing that direction. But I was never very good at settling down for long in a domesticated scene - too many adventures out there calling me this way and that - and at this writing I have absolutely no regrets not bringing innocence into this world with the direction our kind has take it. In fact, I'm quite pleased that I didn't. I have often jokingly said that I love my kids too much to bring them here.

All I have to say about the snappin' and cracklin' and poppin' anymore is, "This getting old is sure getting old." And what a wearisome thing it is to hang with too many shriveling whiners anymore. I moan and groan enough in my own head without having to hear everyone else's endless patter of woe.

And as far as all them words go, they keep coming of their own accord. I just carry paper and pen, and write 'em down when they bubble into mind. I could stop doing it, but I ain't go nothing better going on, so what the hey, it fills some of the time.

Len: Michael … your brilliance will last a lot longer than will we … I am so happy that you learned the alphabet … and that you are truly my friend:

Moi: Along with a moderate ABC education in small rural town Hughson, California, you can also thank Roland Russell for nonchalantly suggesting in early already mind-shaking college: “Mike, why don’t you write poetry; it’s kind of fun.” There was also a brief stint running the Waterford News early out of college, where I quickly learned to always have pen and paper and camera at hand as I wandered through the small town metropolis and surrounding countryside searching for newsworthy fare. As for any brilliance, it seems to be more about being something of a receiving unit with the discipline to write down most the things that come to mind, along with a certain knack for word association, coupled nicely with an adroitness with word processing, greatly aided by the spellcheck and thesaurus functions. As to whether what I’ve written will ever well known, or make any real difference in the future of humankind or the welfare of the planet and all our fellow earthlings, I have many doubts and no time machine. A little too late to make the difference I would be seeking, anyway. I’m afraid we are a little too whacked out at this stage of the game to turn the Titanic a less toxic direction. So, I have come to consider it an enjoyable diversion that fills some of the existential reverie, and am content that a few people in the here and there like yourself find it interesting.
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Silicon Valley parents are raising their kids tech-free – and it should be a red flag
https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/-silicon-valley-parents-are-raising-thei/f-40ca0c91ee%2Fbusinessinsider.com

Moi: You can bet if I was a parent that my kids would abide in the real virtual reality for at least the first ten years. No day care, and probably home school them, too.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a video I sent:

Happiness
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9dZQelULDk

Steve: It’s a cultural manipulation … to get people to work hard … to make someone else happy and rich … all the wealth in the world is within the hands of a few … the rest are slaving away for them … and to add insult to injury … they duped all the slaves … into actually voting for one of the fat rats at the top … to the Presidency of the US.

Moi: The rat race to the "happiness" that really doesn't exist as anything more than one illusionary endorphin fix or another.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles he sent:

The more opioids doctors prescribe, the more money they make

At Pennsylvania rally, Trump again calls for death penalty for drug dealers
https://a.msn.com/r/2/BBK5ma3?m=en-us&ocid=News

Steve: Drug dealers

Moi: The sanctioned version.

Steve: Given that the “Drug Dealers” that kill more people than anyone else in this country are the pharmaceutical companies … and the doctors that overprescribe opioids and other addictive drugs … it occurs to me the Trump must be talking about executing them as well. Legally prescribed drugs kill far more people in this country than illegal ones.

Moi: But isn't it the US of A war in Afghanistan that has colluded a fair portion of the opium, and the Feds get their piece, so I'm pretty sure all the pharmacies and white-coated prescribers will likely keep their heads. Screw us little folk, and all our whining and moaning about equality and fairness for all.
Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

Police used DNA info on genealogy websites to track down Golden State Killer suspect

To Catch a Killer: A Fake Profile on a DNA Site and a Pristine Sample

What the Golden State Killer case means for your genetic privacy

Steve: Guess he got his $99 work when he had the urge to DNA profile himself … guess he didn't read the fine print in the Privacy Policy either … they have a right to sell that info to anyone they want.

Moi: Everything's for sale. Assume it so. And how many of us read the fine print? And even if we do, how many of us click on the "don't accept" button? Like cattle branding themselves.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

'We're doomed': Mayer Hillman on the climate reality no one else will dare mention
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/26/were-doomed-mayer-hillman-on-the-climate-reality-no-one-else-will-dare-mention

Moi: He's not saying anything you and I and any number of people haven't been saying for who knows how many years. The collapse, perhaps extinction, of civilization is pretty darned obvious. Not if, but when and how, are the only questions.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Amazon doubles quarterly profits to $1.6bn – and hikes annual cost of Prime

Steve: Fucking greedy cunts … I may cancel my subscription … I used to pay $79 about 5 years ago … they keep jacking it up.

Moi: Most the things I buy from Amazon have free shipping. Am not usually in that big a rush, so I just wait until enough items are accumulated to meet the minimum. When I do pay shipping, I rationalize it is cheaper than the gas and the time it would take to hunt it down.

And as for movie watching, I'm hooked on Netflix. It would be too much bother re-listing all the movies in my queue. Plus, most the movies I have listed aren't even available on streaming, which is why I do DVD's, and don't have cable or streaming in my apartment.
I did get streaming awhile back for Mom to catch if she gets inclined or we watch something together. Occasionally watch things on my computer where Wi-Fi is available, but rarely because videos on a computer screen just don't do it for me in more than short bursts.

Steve: The problem I have a problem is that I used to feel like I got my money's worth out of it because it seemed like I was paying about the same price as I used to be for Netflix but the movies that you get included with the subscription for either Netflix or prime or all fucking crap I rationalized it by figuring that I was buying so much stuff online that the free shipping was helping but that is a scam to which I will explain to you when we get together

Moi: Haven't heard anything about the free shipping being a scam, so I'll be looking forward to our Cinco de Mayo get-together.

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Links sent to Randy Icelow after talking about the old school military games I played during the younger daze:

Avalon Hill and Strategy & Tactics

Avalon Hill
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avalon_Hill

List of Avalon Hill Games

My Avalon Hill collection included: Battle of the Bulge, Blitzkrieg, Jutland, 1914, Midway, PanzerBlitz, Kingmaker, D-Day, Diplomacy, Wooden Ships and Iron Men

Simulations Publications, Inc.

Strategy & Tactics

Strategy & Tactics Magazine
www.costik.com/spicom/sandt.html

Only had one Strategy & Tactics game:

Terrible Swift Sword
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrible_Swift_Sword_(game)

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Mothers who regret having children are speaking up like never before
http://www.macleans.ca/regretful-mothers/
Moi: I feel sorry for anyone who brings children into this screwed up world. What effort and bother it requires, and for what? It has been rough enough, but I shudder to think what this life would have been like if I'd landed a seed or three in one womb or another back when I was in the chase.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

CES Was Full of Useless Robots and Machines That Don’t Work
https://www.thedailybeast.com/ces-was-full-of-useless-robots-and-machines-that-dont-work

Moi: What a stupid fucking world we've created. I pine for old school.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Empty half the Earth of its humans. It's the only way to save the planet

Moi: Amazing what bullshit some of these writers come up with.

Steve: Yeah … I thought about this … and these people are proposing that to save the planet … humans leave major portions of it … and cram into cities. Besides being absurd … what about the fact that living in crammed cities like they do in China … is a miserable existence … and will make you sick. I think it was John Muir who said that Cities make you sick … and the cure is Nature …

Stating that people naturally want to live in cities is absurd … people are moving to cities because the infrastructure and culture we’ve created … forces them to … where they get used and abused in factories and offices … living a pathetic life with no joy or purpose … other than to make money for unfathomably greedy people.

Moi: Sure over the city thing at this end. Other than museums and such, I have no desire whatsoever to wander through jungles of asphalt and concrete and glass anymore. Just overdone webs of consumption.

Steve: The last time I went into SF I just about had a total breakdown. It was the Saturday before Christmas and I was taking my GF to a play at the Geary Theater by Union Square … Charles Dickens “A Christmas Carol.” I don’t know that I was thinking … that is ground zero for tourist … and SF is brain dead so they permitted construction that fucked it up even more. It took me an hour to get to the off ramp in SF from Morgan Hill … and another hour to go about 1.5 miles to the theater from the 6th street exit off 280.

The entire day cost a shitload of money for simply seeing a play … and I was so pissed off by the time I got through with it … I wished I’d never gone. I used to love going to SF … back
when there was no traffic … but today it is an expensive way to be abused … and it’s become a dirty crowded expensive mind fuck.

Moi: The only way I travel anymore is in my urban camping unit in the middle of the night, and even that is death-defying at times. The last four journeys to San Francisco, Chico, Santa Cruz, and Monterey have all had a why-am-I-doing-this flavor about them. I'll get over your direction one of these spring daze, but I'm not sure I'll follow it up with a coastal expedition the way I have in the past.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

For Austin Bomb Investigators, Each New Blast Offers New Clues

Moi: Hadn't realized they'd gotten him when I sent the article above.

Austin Bombing Suspect Is Identified As Mark Anthony Conditt; Died In Standoff

Steve: Did know that until just now … how did they catch him?

Moi: The video at the FedEx where he mailed a couple packages played a major part. Too early to be sure of all the details. Here's what Wikipedia has so far.

Wikipedia: Austin Serial Bombings
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin_serial_bombings

Death of suspect

Early on March 21, a suspect, 24-year-old Mark Anthony Conditt, was identified by investigators via security footage taken at a FedEx store, and police moved in to make an arrest.

They tracked him to a hotel room in Round Rock, north of Austin, then onto I-35, where they pulled him over at around 2 AM (CDT). As SWAT officers approached, he detonated a bomb in the vehicle, killing himself and injuring one of them, provoking another to fire upon the vehicle. The Austin Police Department closed a southbound section of the interstate where Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents were dispatched to investigate.

Steve: While I understand why people are frustrated if they are disenfranchised from the economy … or feel like a cog in the machine … or are disgruntled because we’ve bombed their country … I don’t understand why they want to hurt unknown people who essentially had no part in their suffering. Why bomb innocent people walking around a street …
Moi: That is a question for the ages. If I was going to be a serial killer, I would do it Dexter fashion, choosing people who deserved it for crimes upon the innocent, and of course those who had crossed me in such a way that savage revenge was the answer.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Brain Damage from Benzodiazepines: The Troubling Facts, Risks, and History of Minor Tranquilizers

Steve: I think you said your sister was on this stuff.

Moi: Ann was taking lithium for her bio-polar condition. Don't know if she took anything else. Mom did valium, but I'm not sure how much or how often. She's survived to age 88 and doing better than you and I likely will, so I think we're past any worries.

Steve: It's rooted in the times … back then they thought these drugs were miracle cures for lonely isolated house wives … who were going crazy in the Nuclear Family.

Moi: Anxiety runs deep in all our minds. Mothers Little Helper was as popular as opioids are today.

Rolling Stones: Mothers Little Helper
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfGYSHy1jQs

Steve: I've been listening to Podcasts that are showing that it's our isolating culture that drives people to drugs. We have a drug problem because people are depressed and lonely … and I believe it.

Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression – and the Unexpected Solutions
https://www.amazon.com/Lost-Connections-Uncovering-Depression-Unexpected/dp/163286830X

Moi: Our mind-bodies evolved out of relationship with nature, so I suspect the rise of so-called civilized existence for the last ten thousand plus-or-minus years is at the root of most if not all of our psychological suffering. Anyone who wants to get back into balance, into synchronicity, needs to get back to nature as much as possible.

Steve: Yes, the problem is that we've become dependent upon the very infrastructure that is making us sick.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Facebook: is it time we all deleted our accounts?
Moi: No worries at this end. They can know as much about me as they please, and it won't make any difference to my world. I feel pretty ignored, actually.

Steve: Their stock is tanking … because people are realizing the extent to which they are being mined for data … and the ramifications are severe in the context of the final result was … the current disruptive chaotic politics that is trashing the US across the globe …

Moi: It would be interesting to see what the breakdown is by age group. I wonder how much the millennials will care.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article and essay he sent:

The Genetic Reason Why Some People Are Born To Travel All Over The World

Cliff’s essay on travel:

WHY TRAVEL?

Standing near a small souvenir kiosk in an international airport recently, I was pondering that very question. As is my wont to do when killing time in airports, I was actively watching the comings and goings of all the various folks who had ventured far beyond their native land. People from dozens of different countries, dozens of different nationalities, speaking dozens of different languages. Always a fascination to me. This question is pretty much a constant in my mind whenever I find myself doing this very thing myself. Why am I traveling?? My grandmother used to say I was just a gadabout, which doesn't quite address the question. My uncle would say I was just a vagabond, which was probably closer to the truth, though still not answering this question as to … why?? Recently I was sent a very interesting study suggesting it's a genetic quirk that some of us have.

But again, I'm not sure that's the answer I've been looking for, though it comes the closest. According to this study, I really don't have much choice in the matter, as it's just a natural occurrence of my genetic structure … I travel because that's what I do. Kind of like eating, sleeping, etc. Sometimes in the middle of some totally random thought, I realize I have to go on a trip somewhere. Not any place in particular. It's just a feeling of the need to go. So usually that's what happens. You do that enough and next thing you know you've been around the world a few times. But back to this question of why … As a striking young lady from some foreign land walked between the kiosk and myself, I found myself staring at this rack of refrigerator magnets (after I politely quit staring at her) and … lo and behold, the answer to my lifelong question was staring at me from a rack of cheap souvenirs. Right there in plain sight, for all the world to see, was the answer: TRAVEL IS THE ONLY THING YOU CAN BUY THAT MAKES YOU RICHER
So now, after all these years, I realize that I've just been trying to get rich. Pretty simple explanation really. And profound in many ways. Though I've never really had lots of money, I realized as a young man, while traveling through many very poor countries (formerly known as third world countries, but now politically incorrect), that I had won the world birth lottery and was one of the richest people on the planet. Being born in the US is like having a free ticket to see the world. That is if you want to travel. Most people don't and that is perfectly fine. But for those of us (Westerners mostly) who do, our birthplace has everything to do with our ability to travel. If you were born in a small village in India or Africa or South America, the chances of you traveling the world are next to none. In fact, most of those travelers I see in those airports are all from developed countries with strong economies, while very few of them are from tiny villages in undeveloped countries. Just a fact of life. I was a lottery winner, and pretty much have been cashing in on my winnings most of my adult life. And according to the profound philosophy of refrigerator magnets, I've just been getting richer all the time. Works for me.

Moi: You are definitely the most world-traveled person I know. There are some tourist friends who have eaten and drunk and shopped all sorts of places, but in my mind you are the only one who has actually traveled. Rich man's life on a dime I calls it.

Cliff: Well said … I just might co-opt that … "Rich man's life on a dime’ … if you don't mind! Ha!

Have seen plenty of those recently who come here (Thailand especially) just to party and drink themselves into oblivion. They make no attempt to understand the culture, language, customs or history. In fact there's a party on one of the islands in the south, Koh Phangan, that draws more than 30,000 young people every full moon … just to drink & party. Pretty sad. Then of course there's the jumbo jets full of well-off Europeans that only come to shop and eat. So much for cultural enrichment.

Cheers, mate!

Moi: Sodom and Gomorrah playing out over and over ... History doesn't repeat itself, but the patterns do.

Don't know if it's true, but I've also heard there's quite a market for sex with children.

Cliff: I've heard that also. And probably true … as the whole world is a Sodom & Gomorrah replay. Kind of like watching the planet self destruct in real time. But the monks still chant at 4 in the morning and it still sounds beautiful. While across town the slave and sex traders steal children and ship them off to rich perverts in various parts of the world. Maybe we've gone way past Sodom and Gomorrah … something way beyond kinky perverted narcissism. Kind of like that guy who thinks he's president in the US.

Ah well … don't these tropical flowers smell wonderful!!

Moi: Back in Jesus's day, the world population was 200 million; today it's almost 7.5 billion. Add a little technology to that mix, and its every insanity playing out on steroids. I think we're both staying out of the way of it as much as possible, putting in what time is left as tranquility and anonymously as our minds, or no-minds, allow.
Worldometers: Current World Population
http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/

Poodwaddle World Clock
http://www.poodwaddle.com/worldclock/

Worldometers: Thailand Population
http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/thailand-population/

Cliff: Jeezlouise! That population clock is mesmerizing. Hard to break away from. Just watching the madness of overpopulation right before your eyes. Pretty friggin' amazing to say the least.

Yes, we both are just hiding out and enjoying our anonymity to the best of each of our ability. Ain't it sweet.

Was reading a novel the other day and a line in it was quite profound … to quote: Life is just a way of killing time.

Cheers, my friend.

Moi: Killing time until kills me … is my line.

I periodically check in with the Worldometers for the same reason. Boggling how few people realize that we've gone up 6.5 billion people in just two hundred years. It hit two billion as our parents were born, and somewhere 2.6-ish when we popped in. Ten billion by 2056? I don't see how, given climate change and all the political, economic, and environmental horrors that are taking shape. Pity the young ... is another of my lines anymore. What would we do if we were starting over, I wonder.

So is Chico still your home base? Or are you wandering the world for the duration?

Cliff: I was so blown away a few years ago when I went back to India for the first time in about 34 years. I mean it was super crowded in 1973 when I first went (especially in comparison to the US), with a population of around 440 million. In 2014 when I returned, the population was 1.2 billion. The population had tripled in just 40 years, with no end in sight. Two-legged madness run amuck. There's no way the planet can handle the stress and degradation that humans inflict on it. We've fouled our nest to the point where I swear I can hear mother nature crying. But she will survive, she just might have to give a couple really good shakes and get rid of this bi-pedal parasite called mankind.

Reminds me of a poem I wrote back in 1979. I'll forward it to you when I get back to Chico as it's old fashion … on paper, in a physical file!

Yep, still hanging out in Chico. Have a sweet deal, living just north of town (just north of Henshaw) on a 20 acre organic farm. Living in a giant studio (1000 square feet) for 500 a month. So I can afford to pay rent there and still travel as much as I feel like. But if the political
situation continues to deteriorate, I might just travel for the duration. As much as I dislike it, we must pay attention at the moment. Ugh.

* * * *

An email sent on May 23, 2015 to Paula Yvonne Hunt, my mother’s older sister and cousin Steve’s mother, who was dying of pancreatic cancer, titled “A Shout-Out From California.” Forwarded a bcc copy to my mother, Beverly Holshouser, as well:

Hey, Aunt Paula,

Thought I would give what sounds like one of the last shout-outs for all our most excellent times these last sixty-plus years. I have really appreciated you and your family being a part of my life. We are a clan of very good and decent human beings, and the crew you and Ralph brought into this world have always been great fun in all the times we have spent together. A rolodex chock-full of many, many splendid memories, indeed.

Mom says you seem pretty calm about things, so I am guessing you have made your peace with the dreamtime as much as anyone can hope in this inexplicable mystery. I hope you do not have to endure too much pain in your transition. I am pretty agnostic about it all at this writing – we are all That I Am as far as I'm concerned – but, one life or many, and as rough as it is at times, it is ever beyond-the-pale magical to have been born at all.

Thanks again for being part of my life.

Namaste, Blessings,

Michael

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My mother responded:

Your words to Paula were just right. I am always amazed at your writing ability. It brought tears to my eyes.

Love you,

Mom

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Response to Mom:

Words come easy and earnest when that's how I feel about it. I do feel blessed in this life.

* * * *

Response to several videos Ninos David sent on Facebook Messenger regarding Islam in Europe and takeover comments by Donald Trump before he was elected president regarding the oil fields in Iraq;
What a wretched species we can be. Absurd beyond all bounds. Exceedingly tiring.

The video on Islam in Britain is priceless. What a horror story it will be in Europe for the rest of time. And America, too. The Third World will drown Western Civilization if climate change doesn't cast us all into the shoals first. Revenge, for all we have done to them since Alexander. As always, be happy we are too old to have to endure it ourselves. At least neither of us had any progeny that we need directly worry about.

So is Trump taking over the oil wells? Haven't seen anything like that in the headlines. Am recovering from a hard-hitting case of bronchitis earlier this week, and prepping for a colonoscopy tomorrow, which is why I haven't been pressing for Fruit Yard time this week.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

John Hammond-16 Shells from a Thirty-Ought Six
https://youtu.be/d-JRlNgc3Io

Moi: Good Monday-night-back-to-work-tomorrow fare.

Steve: I've got the week off ... but breaking my back ... working in my yard. I need to buy a condo with no maintenance

Moi: You could live a simple existence, and rent out the moneymakers.

Mom lives comfortably in a two-bedrooms condo, single-story, with two bathrooms, a two-car garage, a small brick and rock patio, in a very quiet gated community. A couple years ago, I finally convinced her to have a housekeeper come in once a month. Let the landscapers do all the mowing and sundry other outdoor brothers.

Steve: This house isn’t a money maker ... it takes all my money ... until the $300;000 mortgage principal is paid off ...m it's a money pit.

Moi: I was thinking you could charge enough rent to pay it off ... but no.

Steve: I could charge enough to pay the mortgage ...then you have maintenance and repairs etc. ... forgoing something big like a new roof ... I could break even ... and that would take years to pay off.

I need to either work another 10 years ... or sell it and move.

Moi: Well, from what you've said, it's cheaper than rent, and you have plenty of space, so I guess you'll be there until you decide to retire, and then hopefully walk away with a decent amount of change in your pocket. Who know what real estate prices will be in another five or so years.

Steve: Yeah ... it’s funny ... I believe this house is just about the right size ... but I actually feel
cramped compared to my house I sold out in Antioch … I wish I had never sold it … it had a 3 car garage and more rooms.

Moi: The more space you've got, the more you've got to fill, and hard to downsize.

Steve: Well I need a bedroom … and an office … and now … at my age … I need an entire room to put my equipment that I need to manage my health issues … inversion table … and I’d like to set up a massage table so I can have them come directly to my house.

I’d like to have a “Guest” room … but that is now filled with all this other equipment. Ideally a 4 bedroom house would work.

Could I cram into something smaller … I suppose … but I don’t want to put my “Office” in my living room.

Moi: That commute from Antioch to Mountain View … Yeesch.

Steve: Yeah but I didn’t commute from there … I spent the weekends there … and had a commuter room near work … my commute is longer now.

Moi: I forgot you'd mentioned that.

Steve: I loved my house in Antioch … I just didn’t like Antioch … the crime rate got bad and is increasing … but I wish I’d kept it now … I could have moved into it for a couple of years and then saved a lot on taxes … but at the time I thought we were going to hit another recession … if we had … it would have been a good move … still might be in retrospect a few years from now … if the economy crashes and that area goes down the tube as it did last time … I will be glad I sold when I did.

I’m so tired of playing the Capitalism game … I fucking hate it … our lives revolve around work and money and politics … and there is no sense of security.

Moi: Never been much good at playing the game, so I abide whatever winds blow, and am happy enough with the hand I've been dealt. Worked harder, not smarter, is the way I often put it. Contentment is the last hurdle, as far as I see it.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

Human race just 0.01% of all life but has eradicated most other living things
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study

Cliff: I’d say the human is probably the most destructive creature to inhabit this earth … by a long shot. We’re pretty much doomed if humans stay in charge. Just returned from 10 days at the Strawberry Music Festival (my crew now goes much earlier) where I turned off my devices and didn’t listen to one word of news for 10 days. Quite refreshing actually. Have resisted the urge to watch or listen since I got back also … as I’m sure it’s the same old crap of mad men and
their massive fucking egos, plundering, raping, conquering, and destroying the earth, while getting rich in the process. Humankind is in desperate need of a reset … or maybe just a special virus that targets the narcissistic egos of madmen. Or maybe just shoot ’em all.

Moi: We're definitely going to keep chewing away at our Mother and all our fellow earthlings until either we off ourselves, something offs us, or we just plain run out of anything to chew on … and then it's Soylent Green time. Still watching it all, but feeling pretty detached about it any more. Can't imagine anything sane coming out of anything we touch. Kind of like Midas on steroids, but without any will to stop. Heading for a wall at a couple hundred miles an hour, and not even the squeal of brakes. It's rough being a cancer cell, but what the hey, biology will out. Oh, well, so it goes.

Happened on this last night. Impressive.

Youtube Search: The Danish National Symphony Orchestra
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=The+Danish+National+Symphony+Orchestra

** * **

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

A Physicist Has Proposed a Grim Explanation For Why We Never See Aliens
https://www.sciencealert.com/physicist-proposed-horrifying-explanation-why-we-never-see-aliens-fermi-paradox-berezin

Moi: No debate that there's probably all sorts of life forms across the universe, but what are the odds that their worlds have water and land masses and climates that create forests that create creatures that have brains with opposable thumbs and legs and lungs and vocal chords and tool-making abilities that can work together to chase other creatures to extinction. And then somehow get off this planet, and survive who knows what to get at all the creatures on even one world, much less all the orbs that are spinning away out there. As for artificial intelligence playing conquistador, well, I have yet to see any technology last any great amount of time without a human tech having to look under the hood. In other words, I'm not holding my breath that the universe has anything to fear from our little burp of time.

** * **

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Here's How Much Exercise You Need to Give Your Brain a Boost
https://www.livescience.com/62696-exercise-physical-activity-cognitive-skills.html

Steve: My call on this is to simply exercise as much as you want to … which for me is more than this … although I’m sure it will decline in the older years. I enjoy exercise … especially outdoors … so motivation is not a problem … it’s work that gets in the way. If I were retired I’d be doing something every day … because I enjoy it.

Moi: May as well enjoy this mortal cadaver as long as we can is my view, too.

** * **
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Your Job Doesn't Matter: According to David Graeber, we should be excited for robots to take our bullshit jobs.

Moi: And what would most people do if they didn't have to work? More of what they're already doing anytime they have a chance: Eat too much, drink too much, gamble too much, take too many drugs, stare into every screen they can, create all sorts of havoc and inanity. The whole human paradigm is superfluous. We're long overdue for extinction.

Steve: Some I suppose ... not me ... I'd do more communing with nature ... mountain biking and hiking ... reading for pleasure instead of work ... meditating ... socializing ... et cetera.

Moi: Creative minds are probably more inclined towards the leisurely pace that such a world would offer. For the rest, tripe.

Steve: Yes ... sometimes I see what people spend what little free time they have doing ... and it either confused or depresses me ... like reality or television game shows ... I don’t even own a cable television package ... never have ... I simply don’t watch anything that has commercials attached to it ... it’s either PBS science shows ... or movies with some kind of redeeming quality to them.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Syphilis and gonorrhea up by one-fifth in England

Steve: That and more is up a lot in California ... I’m telling you ... Bot Sex will rule in the future.

Moi: The hand and a fantasy works for me anymore. Simpler, cheaper, and I can roll over and get to sleep sooner. And, happily, less and less a force every whirl around the sun. It has been both fun and bother; one that I would never choose to go through again. Way too much effort for the payoff. Just a biological, instinctual fact, nothing more.

Steve: I’ve had similar thoughts ... in the context of it being a source of pleasure ... and a fucking headache ... it’s like being a junky when you’re young. Another thought I’ve had is that if I’d put half the time and energy into making money that I’ve put into women ... I’d be a billionaire by now.

Moi: No doubt. If you'd gone with any of the biggees like Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and even just taken a few handfuls of shares, you'd be sitting anywhere in the world you wanted.

Steve: Could have gone to work for Microsoft as far back as 2000 ... yes ... anywhere.
Moi: Sent Yaj Ekim graphic looking out blurry windshield, the rear view mirror crystal clear: Free will looking forward, fate looking back.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

Human race just 0.01% of all life but has eradicated most other living things
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study

Cliff: I’d say the human is probably the most destructive creature to ever inhabit this earth … by a long shot. We’re pretty much doomed if humans stay in charge. Just returned from 10 days at the Strawberry Music Festival (my crew now goes much earlier) where I turned off my devices and didn’t listen to one word of news for 10 days. Quite refreshing, actually. Have resisted the urge to watch or listen since I got back … as I’m sure it’s the same old crap of mad men and their massive fucking egos, plundering, raping, conquering, and destroying the earth, while getting rich in the process. Humankind is in desperate need of a reset … or maybe just a special virus that targets the narcissistic egos of madmen. Or maybe just shoot ‘em all.

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Cliff: Pretty amazing statistics … .01% of all life’s population decimates 83% of all creatures living on earth. We’re pretty much a destroying entity in the grand scheme of things … yet we think we’re the cream of the crop. Humans are unfortunately bound to their egos and can’t think past their own desires and greed … so the world is subservient to them (or so they think). And with a mindset bent on the idea of “more” we’re pretty much doomed from the get go. But then I’m preaching to the choir! Would be nice if that choir was much larger.

Moi:
cancer |ˈkansər|
noun
the disease caused by an uncontrolled division
of abnormal cells in a part of the body:
he's got cancer | smoking is the major cause of lung cancer.

• a malignant growth or tumor resulting from the division of abnormal cells:
most skin cancers are curable.

• a practice or phenomenon perceived to be evil or destructive
and hard to contain or eradicate: racism is a cancer sweeping across Europe.

Moi: Happened on this last night. Impressive.

Youtube Search: The Danish National Symphony Orchestra
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=The+Danish+National+Symphony+Orchestra

Very cool … Nice to see a woman conductor.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

30 years after warning of global warming: They were right
https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/06/18/30-years-after-warning-of-global-warming-they-were-right/

Moi: And yet so many still question it. Corporations continue to sacrifice the future for a bottom line. Mounds of false gold piled high in a storming cesspool. Boggling.

Merchants of Doubt
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merchants_of_Doubt

Steve: Keep a vile of Fentanyl handy … go out with a smile … instead if a bang.

Moi: Helium is the demise of choice at Studio 101. No muss, no fuss, no risk of waking up in your own puke.

How-to photos at bottom of page:

Final Exit and Related Links
http://finalexitandrelatedlinks.blogspot.com/

Steve: So what's the specifics? … bag over head with tube pumping helium into it … till you loose consciousness?

BTW … you inject a serious dose of Fentanyl in your veins … you're not waking up … ask Tom Petty or Prince.

Moi: Pretty straightforward. Just replace the oxygen with helium. Lots of links on that page to get all the details.

I don't have access to Fentanyl, and why go through all that needle bother when I already have a helium tank in my closet, and there's plenty more down at Party City.

Steve: Could always mix in some nitrous oxide to make it interesting … :-)
Moi: Suicide is about being done with your universe and all the vanities, all the agonies and ecstasies you have played out in its quantum dreamtime. The means is merely what you have inclination toward and access to. However you choose do it, and with whatever quality of mind, whether passionate or pragmatic, you choose to do it, the oblivion is the same, the oblivion is the point.

Steve: When I ponder it ... and the methods I want to consider ... my main focus is to check out painlessly and without dear or panic ... putting a bag over my head freaks ne out ... hence these potential alternatives.

Moi: Agree with the painless part, but a plastic bag is no big deal. Guns are too messy, and needles and chemistry are too much bother. Not putting whoever deals with the body through too much cleanup and mental harshness is also a factor. When that moment comes – assuming I have any control over it – just closing my eyes and peacefully falling asleep will work just fine.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

You’re Wiping Your Butt All Wrong and Probably Injuring Yourself
https://melmagazine.com/youre-wiping-your-butt-all-wrong-and-probably-injuring-yourself-64a57da97c9b

Moi: Here's the way to go:

Bidet
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bidet

Steve: Garden hose.

Moi: The hand-held shower is the weapon of choice at Studio 101.

* * * *
Response:

Pew Research shows fewer than 50 percent of Americans can tell the difference between fact and opinion

Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News
The politically aware, digitally savvy and those more trusting of the news media fare better; Republicans and Democrats both influenced by political appeal of statements

Moi: Is it nature? Is it nurture? Can ignorance ever learn to think critically?

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

‘Gaming disorder’ is now classified as a mental condition — but there’s reason to be skeptical

World Health Organization says video game addiction is a disease. Why American psychiatrists don't

Steve: No shit.

Moi: What would all these millennials do if their screens were taken away?

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

300,000 coastal homes in US, worth $120 billion, at risk of chronic floods from rising seas

Steve: But at least they can watch gorgeous sunsets … as the water rises around their recliner chairs on their sunset deck.

Moi: Might be good prospects for some sort of pilings business. No need to move. Raise your house above Mother Nature's wrath. Make your home into real waterfront property. Could also be very good for the boating business.

Steve: That’s what happened in many places already … Florida and New Orleans … when people rebuilt … they raised their houses onto stilts … and they keep a dingy strapped to their decks for when it happens … personally … I think it’s time to move when you get to that point.

Moi: Yes, but who will pay them enough to buy something else?

Steve: Why it is legal to build developments in areas where the elevation is 30 ft below sea level … and 60 below storm surges … is beyond my comprehension … then they complain when the area floods and accuse the government of not saving them … from their own stupidity.

Moi: I feel little compassion for anyone who builds anyplace Mother Nature is likely to eventually destroy.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Planning a move? By 2021, these 8 states will have no income tax
https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/taxes/2018/06/18/states-that-have-no-income-tax/35708055/
Moi: Alas, except for Washington, not the ones on my possibilities list at this writing. Can't really imagine leaving the West Coast. The Midwest cold is too harsh at this stage of physicality, and anything too dry or too humid are definitely also out.

The decision will be whether to move along the coast somewhere Fort Bragg north, or up on the inland corridor in Oregon or Washington. Really enjoyed Arcata when I was going to Humboldt State for eight months in 1999. Something with fewer people, more moisture, and reasonable access to coffee and health care. Your raving about Eugene puts it very high on the list.

Steve: Yeah ... all in line with my thoughts on this too ... I'll be in Eugene in a couple of weeks for a concert.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Employees who practice mindfulness meditation are less motivated, having realized the futility of their jobs

Moi: Waking up did nothing for my pocketbook, that's for sure. But, oh well.

Steve: These companies make me laugh ... they initiate mindfulness programs to try to mitigate the hell hole that they've created for you to work in ... and then they seem to be surprised when as you become enlightened and more aware ... you suddenly realized that your life is a piece of shit working in their fucking company.

Moi: The trick is to somehow be content that every day you're pushing the boulder up the hill – that it is all entirely meaningless, that it is all completely absurd – but you shrug your shoulders and daily endure the struggle, perhaps even happily.

The Myth of Sisyphus

The Myth of Sisyphus (French: Le Mythe de Sisyphe) is a 1942 philosophical essay by Albert Camus. The English translation by Justin O'Brien was first published in 1955.

In the essay, Camus introduces his philosophy of the absurd, man's futile search for meaning, unity, and clarity in the face of an unintelligible world devoid of God and eternal truths or values. Does the realization of the absurd require suicide? Camus answers, "No. It requires revolt." He then outlines several approaches to the absurd life. The final chapter compares the absurdity of man's life with the situation of Sisyphus, a figure of Greek mythology who was condemned to repeat forever the same meaningless task of pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again. The essay concludes, "The struggle itself [...] is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy".

Camus is interested in Sisyphus' thoughts when marching down the mountain, to start anew. After the stone falls back down the mountain Camus states that "It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see
that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end." This is the truly tragic moment, when the hero becomes conscious of his wretched condition. He does not have hope, but "there is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn." Acknowledging the truth will conquer it; Sisyphus, just like the absurd man, keeps pushing. Camus claims that when Sisyphus acknowledges the futility of his task and the certainty of his fate, he is freed to realize the absurdity of his situation and to reach a state of contented acceptance. With a nod to the similarly cursed Greek hero Oedipus, Camus concludes that "all is well," indeed, that "one must imagine Sisyphus happy."

Steve: I’ve read many of Camus’s books … first got into him in my early 20s … The Fall … in particular.

Moi: Can't say I've read a lot of his works, but what I did read, and his life story, had its impact. Was especially struck by "The Stranger" and the "Myth of Sisyphus".

Steve: The Fall
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fall_%28Camus_novel%29?wprov=sfla1

Moi: Sounds pretty involved. Not sure I've got mind enough to wrap my head around it at this point, but will add it to my Amazon wish list just in case.

Steve: The Plague
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Plague?wprov=sfla1

Moi: Started it a couple times, but didn't get far. Tend to prefer aphorisms anymore. Too lazy to get through storylines.

BrainyQuote: Albert Camus
https://www.brainyquote.com/search_results?q=albert+camus

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion ~ Albert Camus

But what is happiness except the simple harmony between a man and the life he leads? ~ Albert Camus

Steve: From what I’m experiencing these days … there is little “Harmony” anywhere … in either my work environment … personal life … or society in general. We are turning into a caustic culture … ever vigilant … looking for one thing or person after another to blame or criticize … for the pain and suffering … that is simply inherent in life. We could use more Buddhism … which teaches acceptance of the fact that life is full of suffering and pain … instead of expecting it to be completely eliminated … and looking for someone to blame for it.

We’ve turned into a country full of fragile sissies … who scream … rant … rave … and “Demonstrate” … against one individual after another who we blame for our situation in life. A
bunch of Momma’s Boys … raise without strong fathers who taught us that life just ain’t fair … and to do the best you can … while excepting what you can’t change.

We’re all going to go down in this country … and be swallowed by the masses of the world that are heartier than we are … while staring at your cell phones … and posting how unfair it is that the starving masses we’ve been subjugating for centuries … are finally getting their due.

Moi: Every Rome declines and falls sooner or later. As it looks now, we definitely appear to be on the sooner end.

* * * *

Back and forth with Patrick Newman on an article I sent:

Inside the minds of Elon Musk’s fans

Patrick: Hee-haw!!! I knew there had to be this sort of fan base. Wow. End times.

Hope you are well. Good to hear from you.

Moi: Figured you'd enjoy it. His name is always in the headlines, but I haven't really paid much attention to all his hype. All these movie stars, sports personalities, tech magnates, and other self-absorbed types, don't carry much weight in my world.

All's well enough, is my standard line anymore.

Keep on keeping on.

Ciao, ciao,

M

P.S. Just spotted the attachment. Congratulations on being declared a sick man by a true believer.

Patrick: We have a funny little war going on here (Nancy Wrinkle is like a homeless-hating Simpson's character).

Just got back from Lassen. Mostly I slept. Off coffee, day four.

I just wrote this sentence to another friend. Channeling Michael Holshouser, I do believe:

It takes a deep appreciation of irony to see our foolishness and striving and our occasional moments of insight or kindness for what they are: the flailing of flawed beings, in the context of a majestic universe, which allows our existence for an instant. On my best days, I remember I don't know a damn thing; on other days, I suffer the curse of imagining I do.

Moi: There it is in a nutshell.
Don't think I sent you this link. Take a zoom-in look at the graphic, and where and for how long we're in it.

This Timeline Shows The Entire History of The Universe, And Where It's Headed

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The debt curve from Hell is upon us
http://thehill.com/opinion/finance/394493-the-debt-curve-from-hell-is-upon-us

National Debt of the United States
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_debt_of_the_United_States

Yet another domino a-quivering away, as the world careens madly towards the wall of dissolution, and not even the hint of squealing brakes. Way more than my wee brain wants or needs or even can wrap its head around at this stage of its mortal game.

My concern is that I may not have a pension to retire with soon ... but the next si called recession won't be just that ... the entire economy will collapse ... bank savings and all.

Could be very bleak very soon for everyone. Buy what you need and want now while the dollar is still worth something.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Criminal Behavior, Not Racism, Explains 'Racial Disparities' in Crime Stats

Moi: Another truth for the propaganda mills to ignore.

Steve: Yeah … this has been obvious to anyone with common sense … but if you even try to say that perhaps there are more “fill in any demographic other than white males” causing more crime and therefore that is why there are more of them getting arrested or shot … you are labeled a racist or sexist … so stating the truth gets you nothing but labeled as a Nazi White Supremacist.

Steve: This is the first article I’ve ever read that says … The emperor has no clothes … in fact … I was surprised to see that it states that the police are actually less reactive towards blacks … because they’re afraid of the backlash.

Moi: Being a policeman might well be the last thing I would ever do. That, or joining the military. Both total no-wins from the get-go.
And right down there, also, would be your job.

Speaking of which, how are you and your compatriots doing with all the bad news on pensions and such? Must be some very frustrated people wandering the halls in Mountain View.

Steve: There are more issues piling up than I can count … and people are leaving that we need … it’s going to make it worse … and is already impacting me in severely acute ways.

If we … and I mean everyone in this country and the rest of the world … survive this administration … it will be a miracle. And even if we do … the Supreme Court will be trashed for decades. The remainder of our time on this planet is looking bleaker by the day … and it seems like the ignorant masses don’t see it coming.

The people who are going to get fucked the most are those who voted for them … the irony is astounding … but if they think they have it bad now … when they see their social security and Medicare disappear …. And the recession hits which will cause inflation to skyrocket … so that any money you have saved will be devalued so much you won’t have anything left in a year or two … and we’re all jobless … homeless … and with no support system … society will fall apart … the homeless situation we have now will seem like nothing compared to what is coming.

Moi: Boggling that one moron can do so much harm, invoke so much chaos, so quickly. Keep hoping he will be exited anytime soon by some sort of coronary implosion or a dollop of full metal jacket.

Steve: It’s not just one person in my mind … he’s just the puppet they use … what’s behind him is the 1% … the Republican Party has become an instrument for the obscenely wealthy oligarchs to infiltrate and usurp the Government … they’ve take it over and are running it to benefit themselves … to the demise of the masses … it’s not sustainable … it will destabilize society in the long run.

Moi:

Well, Doctor, what have we got -- a Republic or a Monarchy?

A Republic, if you can keep it.

The response attributed to Benjamin Franklin at the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, when queried as he left Independence Hall on the final day of deliberation.

Back and forth between Steve and Michael Gennaro, an old friend of his:

Steve: Let me make something clear that I’ve experienced personally … and I’m not sure if you have … but there are two instances I can relay:

When I was in my early 20s I was in SF with some friends waiting in an alley outside a club to go in. A couple of cops started harassing a friend of mine and I simply asked him what he had done and why were they hassling him. I got arrested … handcuffed … taken behind a precinct
… and had the shit kicked out of me while I had my hands handcuffed behind my back. My hair had been pulled out … my ribs bruised … lumps on my head … I got beat up … bad. And I couldn’t do a fucking thing about it. My lawyer said so. It’s your word against theirs and they win every time. There were not cameras everywhere in those days. I simply had to swallow that and take it. Note: I’m white … this happens to all sorts of people … not just black people.

Around the same time in my life some friends of mine were shooting guns in the middle of nowhere outside Livermore … in the open country off of a country road … intentionally in the middle of nowhere. We had done this many time before. We were simply shooting at cans and bottles etc. for the fun of it. A couple of cop cars came flying up … skidding into the dirt … doors flying open … cops behind their doors pointing guns as us and yelling to drop our guns … all in a very fast quick tense confrontation that caught us by total surprise … we didn’t think we were doing anything illegal … and at the time … we weren’t … it was open public land. I started to put my gun down and they kept yelling for me to drop it … get on my knees … hand behind my back … the whole bit … just like in a movie … shoved to the ground and handcuffed. Today … I probably would have been shot and killed … but I came close to that that day. That was 30 years ago.

I’ve been subjected to these very same situations. Blacks probably are more because they are living in higher crime areas and they are involved in more crimes … as this study shows. I believe that is historical and rooted in poverty … more than it is anything else. But the point I’m making … is that white people get shot too … all the time … but it’s not a racial Issue when it happens so you never hear about it. If a Black person is shot … it’s automatically labeled as due to racism … and I believe that if it is at times … it’s the minority of the times … this study shows that it is predominantly due to the fact that blacks are committing more crimes.

The point being that they are taking what is a minority of situations … and stating that it is the cause in all situations … they are mischaracterizing statistics. They need to take responsibility for the crime in their areas and do something about it. Way more blacks are shot by other blacks … the number of blacks shot by cops is minimal … it is not an epidemic. What is an epidemic is blacks shooting each other. So apparently they don’t think that Black Lives Matter all that much … if they are killing each other in record numbers.

This has been obvious to anyone with common sense … but if you even try to say that perhaps there are more “fill in any demographic other than white males” causing more crime and therefore that is why there are more of them getting arrested or shot … you are labeled a racist or sexist … so stating the truth gets you nothing but labeled as a Nazi White Supremacist.

This is the first article I’ve ever read that says … The emperor has no clothes … in fact … I was surprised to see that it states that the police are actually less reactive towards blacks … because they’re afraid of the backlash.

Michael Gennaro: I don’t think you can generalize one way or the other about cops. There are nearly 1 million police officers in our country and you often hear the caveat something to the effect, ‘most cops do a great job every day’. I’m sure that’s true. And I’m sure there are racists cops just as racism exists in all walks of life. The police force is one place where there can be no allowance for racism, so the fact that there is some will always be an issue (be it a black racist cop or a white racist cop). I can tell you that if I were a black parent, I would have a talk with
my kids about being on best behavior when interacting with the police because you never know when you might encounter a cop who is quicker on the draw when dealing with a black kid.

Steve: Now one could argue that there are more blacks committing crimes because of racial bias in our culture in general … which puts them in more poverty situations … so they turn to crime to survive … and that that is the root cause … I’ll listen to that … but it is a fact that more blacks commit crimes than other demographics … and … the primary threat to a black male is not getting shot by police … it’s getting shot by another black male … and … this states that police have more to fear from getting shot by a black male … than the other way around.

Michael Gennaro: Yeah, I can see why a cop might have more fear when confronting a black man than when confronting a white man. The problem as I see it is when that heightened fear causes the cop to respond to the situation differently because of this inherent bias. The fact is that the cop knows almost nothing about the individual he is confronting, regardless of skin color, and he should function based on his training rather than on some bias that there are a lot of bad black men out there and this might be one. If a cop can’t do that, he should find another profession. I couldn’t do it.

Steve: This is what I mean by the Left is distorting the facts … I don’t believe we have a major issue in this country with cops shooting blacks unjustifiably.

Michael Gennaro: I don’t know how major the issue is. Hopefully, it’s not as bad as it might be based on some of the things we’ve seen. The last time I visited Leanne’s parents in Chicago, one of her dads friends stopped by. He is a retired Chicago cop. I asked him about how hairy his job had been, and he starting talking about it. He policed some crime ridden areas and he told me the he and his fellow cops viewed the black man as their enemy. He said that when a call came in about a shooting of a black man, they would often go have coffee first before showing up at the crime scene because they hoped that maybe more black guys would get shot before they arrived. Now he’s talking about many decades ago of course. He also said when confronting a black man, the cops shot first and asked questions later. He talked about his exploits with some regret I think. So I asked if he was in favor of the greater scrutiny that cops are now under. He said, no, you have to let cops do their job. This answer surprised me and I’ll never forget it.

Still, this is Chicago several decades ago. I hope it’s nothing like that now, but my guess is that it can still be a bit like this at times, but that all the scrutiny is making this gradually better. One more way our society tends to inspect itself and tries to improve.

Steve: I believe they are getting shot because they are committing crimes or threatening the cop. Does that mean there are never any instances of cops being racist? Of course not … but it is not an epidemic … there’s more blacks threatening cops than the other way around … but if you say that … people discount it and refuse to look at the facts.

Michael Gennaro: There should be more people threatening cops than the other way around. There are criminals out there. But we give cops significant authority and a gun, and they need to handle all of that professionally. When a cop does not, I think it matters. We can always get into trouble by extrapolating the bad things we see, which I think is much of what you are talking about. I agree.
A few months ago a basketball player for the Milwaukee Bucs was harassed and tasered by cops. The footage was released and the cops suspended. I watched the approx. 30 minutes of video. What I saw was a cop who was pushing for a fight with a young, big black man driving an expensive car, a fight that was not fair because the cop had his authority, his taser, his gun, and his backup cops on his side. It was horrendous, Steve. I see a cop escalating the situation at every turn. If you have the time, here’s the 30-minute video. Now, it’s just one case. But it’s still very wrong, in my opinion, and as a society we can do better. But I would never be critical of cops in general. They do a job I would not do.

Sterling Brown Tasering and Arrest
https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video;_ylt=Awr9Du5ZMzVbhzUA1wVXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTEyNmlwc2k1BGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBH270aWQDQjU1ODVfMQRzZWMc2M-p=fulll+video+of+sterling+brown&fr=yfp-t-s#id=3&vid=6035319527cf139681021fe29a3fbaf&action=view

I hope this is true. We’ve seen a few ugly incidents and it’s hard to know how representative it is. The Justice Department did find widespread racism in the Ferguson police department.

Moi: Wow, those are some pretty harsh memories. Nothing like it in all my interactions with the coppers, which have really only been traffic violations, pretty much all of them justifiable and long overdue. Have so far been more than a little lucky to have never been caught for the many things that were incarceration-worthy.

As far as policing and racism goes, it's not a job I would ever do, so all I hope is that anyone who does choose that path will do it as professionally, as respectfully, as by the book as is any-given-day possible. And try not to kill or abuse anyone unless there is no alternative. I think the movie "Colors" with Robert Duvall and Sean Penn caught the challenge of wearing a badge as well as any I've ever seen.

Colors

Steve: I wouldn’t choose that profession … which makes me question why those who do … would want to … they’re either delusional about what the job entails and the life they are going to buy into … or they are high on the prospect of being in control.

Moi: All kinds of guns and other dangerous toys, fast cars, and a white hat to boot.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Motley Fool: This Is the Most Misunderstood Concept in Renewable Energy.

Moi: Fortunately, I'll likely be dead before it really becomes an issue that interferes with my having things warm or cold as needed.
Back and forth with Tyler Leigh Couchman on an email I sent:

You still alive?

Tyler: Very much so. How are you doing these days? Feeling good I hope.

I’m living out in Calaveras county on the property now, and in the process of selling the other one up north. Met a different woman over the summer, and now I’m going to be a Dad come October. Ha ha, things can change so quickly. I embrace all of it.

You at Starbucks on Geer most mornings still? Next time I’m in Turlock I’ll stop in.

Moi: Yowze, that is a most unexpected turn of events. Definitely a life-changer. What a thing it will be to see your genes in a child's face.

All's well enough at this end. No big changes. I've been switching up the morning routine. Sometimes Geerbucks, sometimes Brenda Athletic Club, sometimes Stan State, sometimes home, so best give a day's notice if you can. Send both an email and a text to be sure I catch it.

I’ll get in touch later this month when I’m in Turlock and maybe we can meet up.

Moi: Looking forward to catching up on all them adventures.

Back and forth with Tyler Leigh Couchman on an email I sent:

Moi: Less than halfway to daddy-hood. Pretty sure you'll be good at it. Hope all's well.

Tyler: All is well Ekim. A lot of time in contemplation of being a Father. It’s a turbulent stillness. I see myself steering away from ideas I once had about parenting. As we go on, I suspect it will be something like bumper cars.

Still want to catch up one day, have some coffee and pretend that words hold meaning.

Hope you are well my friend and brother.

Moi: Have spent a lot of time with women and children in a variety of ways in this existence, and all I can really say is that you are on the cusp of an adventure that will, for the rest of your daze, serve up every imaginable ecstasy, every imaginable agony. I have no doubt you'll give it your best, but know there is no perfection in the task at hand.

No big news at this end. Just keeping it simple, looking out for me Mum, trying to preserve what's left of the mind-body, watching the world turn in this little portal of illusion. And words, as meaningless as we both know they are, are still bubbling into consciousness in the random here and there.
Would be great to catch up on the sundry details of your entrée into householderhood. Probably not much need for you to be in Turlock anymore, so I’d be happy to run into you somewhere more convenient – e.g., Oakdale, Modesto – in your occasional forays down the hill.

Meanwhile, keep on keeping on, and rotsa ruck.

Ciao, ciao,

M

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Police: Inmate kills Kansas deputies escorting him to court

Moi: How do you allow someone to grab your gun? My guess is some new prisoner containment procedures are very quickly being rolled into place.

Steve: I hope I never have to rely upon a police officer of this caliber to protect me in any way.

Moi: You're on your own if something does happen, is the way I see it. All the police can do in most cases is sift through whatever's after the fact, and maybe harvest enough clues to solve something, which may or may not do you much good, especially if you’re crippled or dead.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Why are Americans so sad?
https://qz.com/1306176/why-are-americans-so-sad/

Moi: We abide in a culture of discontent. Contentment is failure. Nothing is ever satisfactory. Success is ever out of reach. Power and fame and fortune are all that matter. We live for what others think. Too much is not enough.

For myself, it's less about sadness than it is weariness with all the ignorance and suffering and futility. How long to keep pushing that fucking boulder up the fucking hill, is the question.

There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn ~ Albert Camus

The Myth of Sisyphus

Life is thickly sown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to pass quickly through them. The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us ~ Voltaire
I have lived eighty years of life and know nothing for it, but to be resigned and tell myself that flies are born to be eaten by spiders and man to be devoured by sorrow ~ Voltaire

Very learned women are to be found, in the same manner as female warriors; but they are seldom or ever inventors ~ Voltaire

BrainyQuote: Voltaire
https://www.brainyquote.com/search_results?q=voltaire+quotes

Steve: Good one … I find rumination on past slights … will eat you alive.

But they sure are prolific … in their analysis and criticisms of men … as if it is any business of a woman to define what it is to be a man. I’ve told women who seemed to think they are such … that only a man can define what it is to be a man … by his very existence if nothing else.

Ditto … it’s all so futile … the things I used to think mattered in my youth … wasted my youth … if I had it to do all over again … I would have found a more relaxing path in life … the struggling to achieve … as defined by others … is a miserable existence … and a mirage that you never reach.

Moi: Women have no friggin' clue what men are about, but that we should without question or complaint, play their nonsensical sugar-and-spice-and-everything-nice games.

* * * *

A couple back-and-forths with Joseph McMahon of Bayside, New York, after friending me on Facebook:

Joseph: Hi Michael, really enjoying your writings … resonating … lovely pointings … Thank you for your friendship.

Moi: Thanks, and welcome aboard.

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Joseph:

Hi Michael,

I am reading through your writings in ‘The Pondering of Yaj Ekim’ and I must say, it is quite lovely. It is a very deep seeing written with a simplicity that only clarity could make possible in writing about such things. What you write about resonates very profoundly with me. I know exactly what you are saying and am ‘with’ you every word along the way.

I know what you have come to know and see what you have come to see, but it seems like, here, the ‘fan blade is still slowly spinning to a stop’ after the plug has been pulled.

I love the simplicity and profundity of your writing. What you point to is mind-boggling and yet simultaneously no-mind says nothing is happening. There is no mind to be boggled. How does
one speak of these things? I think you have found a beautiful way.

Moi: I like your fan blade analogy. It's been an interesting process. Could turn off the tap, but them thoughts keep a-bubbling into mind in the here and there, and I enjoy writing enough to always have pen and paper at the ready. So no end in sight for the time-being. Thanks for the thoughts.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Where have all our insects gone?
If all humankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed 10,000 years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.

Moi: Will humankind be extinguished, or at least diminished enough to do no more harm, before we destroy the web completely? Oh for that time machine.

Web of Life 101: Food Web
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_web

Steve: The best hope for the planet as a whole ... would be to have humans be extinguished ... If we cared at all about the planet and other life forms ... we'd all commit suicide.

Moi: The "if" that – for all practical purposes – is not, never was, will never be.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

An Empire of Exploitation, a World of Misery, and the Revolution Humanity Cries Out For

Moi: Yet another "We can still save ourselves" article. So friggin' absurd to think the masses are capable of freeing themselves from the overlords.

The horror! The horror! ~ Joseph Conrad

Wikipedia: The Heart of Darkness

Kurtz's health worsens on the return trip, and Marlow himself becomes increasingly ill. The steamboat breaks down and, while it is stopped for repairs, Kurtz gives Marlow a packet of papers, including his commissioned report and a photograph, telling him to keep them away from the manager. When Marlow next speaks with him, Kurtz is near death; as he dies, Marlow hears him weakly whisper: "The horror! The horror!"
A short while later, the "manager's boy" announces to the rest of the crew, in a scathing tone, "Mistah Kurtz—he dead". The next day Marlow pays little attention to the pilgrims as they bury "something" in a muddy hole. He falls very ill, himself near death.

Upon his return to Europe, Marlow is embittered and contemptuous of the "civilised" world. Many callers come to retrieve the papers Kurtz had entrusted to him, but Marlow withholds them or offers papers he knows they have no interest in. He then gives Kurtz's report to a journalist, for publication if he sees fit. Finally Marlow is left with some personal letters and a photograph of Kurtz's fiancée, whom Kurtz referred to as "My Intended". When Marlow visits her, she is dressed in black and still deep in mourning, although it has been more than a year since Kurtz's death. She presses Marlow for information, asking him to repeat Kurtz's final words. Uncomfortable, Marlow lies and tells her that Kurtz's final word was her name.

Steve: Perhaps the Horror he was referring to ... was the prospect of returning to civilization ... and a lifetime of marriage ... LOL

Moi: Both ends of the river are the same river.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Antarctica is melting faster than anyone thought, and we're not ready for the sea level rise that's coming

Moi: There they go again, pretending climate change can be turned around. That their little algorithms mean anything. That anyone's going to be ready what's coming around the bend.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Why you should think twice before getting in a pool
https://www.popsci.com/pool-germs

Since it's right across the street, I enjoy an hour or two doing what I call Aqua Chi -- repetitive movement of arms and legs every which way -- in the club pool almost every day, but I never put my head underwater anymore for all the reasons cited in this article. Am very conscious of food, air, and waterborne life forms at this writing. Ignorance was bliss, but a little knowledge keeps me in the game.

And I would never own my own pool or spa, even if I was the only one using it. Way too much bother, way too expensive. A $35-a-month club membership is nothing in comparison for all the time I spend over there.

* * * *

Back and forth with Joe Warda on an article I sent:
Awakening from the Autobiographical Self
https://theheartofconsciousliving.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/awakening-from-the-autobiographical-self/

I had to read a couple of times and now I'm thinking about it!!!

So perhaps I won't be hearing about you again anytime ever.

* * * *

Back and forth with Joseph McMahon on an article I sent:

Moi: Here's an article I think you'll appreciate:

Awakening from the Autobiographical Self
https://theheartofconsciousliving.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/awakening-from-the-autobiographical-self/

Joseph: Hi Michael, funny, I’ve been sitting here reading your book for the last half hour... really loving it... I’ll take a look at the link when I get home... Thank you!

Moi: Sitting in my neighborhood Starbucks transcribing yesterday's ramblings. Putting together an updated PDF of this year's babble for the website titled, 'The Unfolding Next Round' – Over 400 pages, so far. Will send you the link when it's up and running.

Joseph: Ha! I’m in my neighborhood Starbucks, too! A lot of discernment and contemplation/peace can be had in the busy marketplace for a quiescent mind ... I look forward to the link.

Moi: A friend turned me onto Denny's, Sambo's, Hobo Joe's, and the like, back in early college, and coffee shops have been my forum ever since.

Joseph: There is something about being in the midst of activity and being thought-free simultaneously ... this is why I really enjoy your writings ... you seem to be able to express it ... I can’t ... at least not yet ... I seem to have landed in a sort of emptiness ... I can appreciate the movement of mind but I’m drawn to the non-movement of mind ... and then, what is left to say.

Moi: Wake up ... fall asleep ... wake up ... fall asleep ... is how it is for me. I go back and forth between the time-bound and the timeless like a ping pong ball. That's why the articulation keeps simmering. Haven't quite hit that point where I'm ready to play Buddha in a park, or stare at a wall all day.

Joseph: Hi Michael, sounds familiar ... I call it a non-abiding awakening ... it feels like one can only go just so far and then something else has to sort of take over and finish it off ... surrendered ... living in both worlds ... today was 4th of July and we had company ... I was keenly aware of both the concept of ‘July 4th’ and the non-existence of it throughout the day while interacting with family and friends ... it just doesn’t feel ‘finished’ yet here.

Just finished reading the link you sent me ... very clear and succinct ... yes, the ‘new’ awakened
voice bantering in the head as the new ‘me’ ... another layer of the onion to peel.

Moi: Conscousness is a beast that will not easily die ... Happy, oh happy, 4th of July.

Last night's dittyfest while picnicking solo, waiting for the fireworks at the nearby university to begin.

LEFTOVERS

If you had but eyes, your universe would be but sight. 
If you had but an ear, your universe would be but sound. 
If you had but a mouth, your universe would be but taste. 
If you had but a nose, your universe would be but smell. 
If you had but skin, your universe would be but touch. 
And what would your universe be with but a mind?

* * * *
It is eyes that create light and shape and color. 
Ears, sound; tongue, taste; nose, smell; flesh, touch. 
What would your universe, your world, be 
With even one less, much less all.

* * * *
The mind ever tries to control the what is, but it never can, never has, never will, 
Because the space-time born of consciousness is not real, 
Never has been, will never be.

* * * *
The world will do everything it can 
To drag you back to its illusion 
Inspired by your delusion.

* * * *
What is an eclipse but one relatively large piece of orbiting dust 
Getting between another relatively large piece of dust and a nuclear-powered flashlight. 
Yet another relatively inflated example of much ado about nothing 
In the relativity of the human absurdity.

* * * *
Humankind’s domestication of this garden world 
Is but a relatively temporary reign. 
Darwin will rise again.

* * * *
Nothing really matters, 
Nothing really does not matter, 
Matter being what it is, and what it is not.
* * * *
What some call negativity, pessimism, skepticism, doubt, cynicism,
To the rational mind of the critical thinker, is merely the way it is.

* * * *
hierophant |ˈhɪə(ə)rəˌfænt |
noun
a person, especially a priest in ancient Greece,
who interprets sacred mysteries or esoteric principles.

SOUNDBITES
How many so-called great warriors have never fought the greatest battle within?

* * * *
What a great deal of work it takes to do nothing well.

* * * *
How much does imagination require to see it is but an illusion?

* * * *
How focused ambition must be in order to fulfill great desire.

* * * *
A few deep breaths can inspire greater courage than any set of neuron sparks.

* * * *
How can you imagine any speculation but less true?

* * * *
All that gluttony and you’re still hungry!?

* * * *
To a true believer, it really matters, and woe unto those who differ.

* * * *
True contentment is being at peace with the everything that is nothing all the while.

* * * *
Layers of subtlety are the hallmark of a sage’s thinking.

* * * *
What is death but a dream forever extinguished.

* * * *
Desire will carry on for as long as you are driven mad by its siren call.
* * * *

You are the quantum breeze.

* * * *

Is that all? Seriously!?

* * * *

Consciousness an insatiable beast that will not easily die.

* * * *

No projection of imagination, no matter how lucid, how fearless, has ever been real.

POSSIBLE TITLES

A Rumor of Existence

* * * *

Lives of Pain

* * * *

The Time-Bound Mind

* * * *

The Human Absurdity

* * * *

Quantum Breeze

* * * *

The King’s Whore

* * * *

The Queen’s Whore

BREADCRUMBS

The ability, the courage, to walk up to total strangers and start a conversation, Was a talent that Lyle displayed again and again to his shy friend.
It was but an ember when he departed so very young;
A gift parlayed in many ways ever since.

* * * *

I have worked very hard to do nothing.

* * * *

Christine once called me a hierophant:
A person, especially a priest in ancient Greece,
Who interprets sacred mysteries or esoteric principles.
* * * *
There was an epoch to witness, to write,
And disperse across the planet in the many ways
This contemporary dreamtime offered.
This is what I was born to do.
How utterly amazing
To have been given the opportunity.

Joseph: Great stuff... I like the last paragraph... I think it may be true.

I just added you to a group I started several months ago. I think you will find it interesting. It’s only purpose is to point to silence as a doorway to what the Sages are pointing to – the thought-free state of no-mind. There’s a pinned post that explains the guidelines if you would like to post something... otherwise, it’s just worthwhile to enjoy the quotes...

Moi: Not sure how the group thing works nowadays on Facebook. Just found a page full of invites I’d never spotted before. Does the one you started have a name an/or link?

Joseph: ‘Maha Mauna’ (Great Silence)

Moi: Not finding it on my group invite list. Maybe get me the link.

Just uploaded the PDF of this year’s first six months.

The Unfolding Next Round (Updated Quarterly)

Joseph: It’s funny, it’s saying ‘something went wrong’ and cannot add you right now ... who knows ... I’ll try again later or you can just search for the group ‘Maha Mauna’.

Thanks for the link to your next upload ... I’ll take a look.

Moi: Found it and accepted the request. Had left off the (Great Silence) part when I was searching before.

Maha Mauna (Great Silence)
https://www.facebook.com/groups/166379210455377/

Looks good, thanks!

Joseph: You may find inspiration for future topics/writings ... very respectful group ... no bickering or debating ... not even dialoguing ... it’s a private group and I just invite people I think might appreciate it ... enjoy.

Moi: Ever run across this one?
Sarlo's Guru Rating Service

Joseph: No, I don't think I’ve seen this one ... I saw one similar to it though … I think it was called Guru Ratings?

It says that the search function was 'discontinued' ... that makes it a little difficult to navigate.

Moi: Haven't looked at Sarlo's site for quite a while. He covers a lot of ground. Lots of names of all the players, plus and minus. There might be some other websites out there doing the same thing, but this is the only one I'm aware of.

What's amazing is how much of this sort of thing is out there, which is the big reason I don't put any big effort on pushing my stuff. Whatever redeeming value it has will have to grow its own legs. The proof is in the pudding, so to speak.

In case you haven't seen it, this was one of the many things put together when I was a full-fledged Facebook junkie in the not too long ago. Links too all sorts of things if you scroll down the timeline a bit.

Michael's Little Warehouse of All Things Amusing, Absurd & Profound

Joseph: Thanks Michael, I thought I saw it awhile back but I’ll take another look.

* * * *

Back and forth with Joseph McMahon on a follow-up to a previous conversation:

Hey, Joseph, a little edit on one of the above:

The universe is a quantum matrix; a timeless, indivisible, indelible, vibratory theater. Every life form has its own unique relationship with its enigmatic mystery. In humankind, it is through the eyes that the mind discerns light; Ears, sound; tongue, taste; nose, smell; flesh, touch. What would your cosmos, your world be, With even one or two or three less, much less all.

Joseph: Hi, Michael, when I first read this (in your book?) I felt the last sentence was a little awkward for me to read - even though this may not be what you changed ... when I reread the last sentence, I whispered to myself at the end of the sentence ‘What would your cosmos, your world be, with with one or two or three less, much less all (of these)’.

The writing is consistent with your ability to speak about the unspeakable (which I truly enjoy).

Moi: Scroll up a bit. It was a rewrite of one that I wrote a few nights back at the 4th of July fireworks show.
Joseph: Okay yes, I see it … you expanded on it a bit.

Moi: This sort of thing blurs together. Can't imagine trying to even get through the just over 4,800 pages that have drip-drip-dripped out in the last not quite 30 years, much less remember where anything is located.

Joseph: I don’t know how you do it. You definitely have a talent for it.

Moi: Whether it be writing, music, painting, dance, architecture, science, athletics, cooking, war, or any other art, we are all receiving units for whatever calls us, is how I've come to see it. And for some, it's just a bar stool or a couch.

Joseph: Yes, I agree, I feel the urge to share but I also intuit that it’s not quite done yet ... the understanding is not abiding ... the problem with this orientation though, is that one may keep saying this until they drop the body ... this is the rub with waiting to be ‘done’ ... no end to seeking the ‘finish’ line.

Moi: If there is a finish line, will you know when you pass it? Or care?

Joseph: No, the finish line will evaporate with the irreversible abidance ... One doesn’t know that one does or doesn’t know ... Or cares.

Moi: It never having been a race or contest of any sort, but more of a conundrum that required no solution.

Joseph: Yes, I’m playing with the idea that maybe I’m just playing (as the Self) ... I usually just wind up in silence when I contemplate waiting or manifesting... even though I recognize that ‘I’ ‘do’ nothing … a conundrum indeed.

Moi: Sometimes we are a human being playing Self, and other times Self playing a human being.

An article my cousin Steve sent:

Generation wealth: how the modern world fell in love with money

And my response:

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom. You never know what is enough until you know what is more than enough ~ William Blake

BrainyQuote: Greed
https://www.brainyquote.com/search_results?q=greed

Joseph: Yes, I can see (in my own experience) how it can feel like that when the mind is moving
... and yet silence does not admit of anything whatsoever... I seem to have touched something beyond all language, all ideas, all movement of mind, and it is difficult for me to entertain any ideas that I know what this display is.

It sounds worse than it actually is ... when the fear that arises when the mind is stopped ceases ... then this no-mind can be touched and there is not such a strong attachment to move with the movement of mind ... But this can feel sort of empty ... dead one moment, blissful the next.

Moi: I can't imagine that we all don't have moments where we're more attuned than others. The trick is not to bother about it. As Krishnamurti used to say, if you find yourself not paying attention, pay attention to the inattention. A couple favorite Rumi quotes: Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Language, ideas, even the phrase each other, doesn't make any sense. And the other: You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop.

Off to the gym for some pool time. Good chatting. Ciao, ciao.

Joseph: Peace, thanks for the dialogue.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Silicon Valley insiders revealed that Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter are using 'behavioural cocaine' to turn people into addicts

Moi: But hasn't every commercial enterprise since trade first began, worked hard to addict their customers to whatever product was being sold? Maybe the online world is more effective, more intense, but it's nothing new in my thinking. It still falls back on the individual to reign in their own mind and body. No one is forcing anyone to drink the Kool-Aid.

Steve: Problem is they're reading your email, text messages, and listening to your phone calls ... and using that to do this.

Moi: No worries, I'm not that interesting, and they're not going to get anything out of my wallet that I don't want to spend.

* * * *

Back and forth with Ninos David on an article he sent:

Who is Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador?

Moi: Sounds like a Mexican version of Bernie Sanders. We'll see if they let him live.

Ninos: That is the question!
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Former British Army Sergeant Sentenced After Parachute Murder Attempt Of Wife

British sergeant jailed for life for tampering with wife's parachute

'Shocking betrayal': the soldier, the lover and the sabotaged parachute

Steve: After digesting this ... read the last paragraph twice.

Moi: Amazing. Sounds like another Scott Peterson, only this time Lacy somehow survived.

So this woman is on her own with two kids, and seemingly not angry, not getting divorced, and rationalizing the whole thing. Pretty friggin' beyond the pale.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Credibility Concerns Lead NIH To End Study Of Alcohol's Health Effects
https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/06/15/620328777/credibility-concerns-lead-nih-to-end-study-of-alcohols-health-effects

It Was Supposed to Be an Unbiased Study of Drinking. They Wanted to Call It ‘Cheers.’
Buried in a new N.I.H. report are disturbing examples of coordination between scientists and the alcohol industry on a study that could have changed America’s drinking habits.

Steve: Alcohol is a toxic and a carcinogen ... in any amount.

Moi: Can't even begin to speculate how many years have been shaved off my potential longevity and well-being with all the hedonism this mind-body has endured, but it surely must be in the double digits.

And the night ain't over.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

In just 10 minutes, an encounter on a Westminster street corner went from road rage to deadly shooting, police say
Westminster shooting likely a road rage incident, suspected killer admitted to shooting

After waiving his Miranda rights and admitting to the shooting, Webster also told police he “has mental health issues and just started a new prescribed medication today,” according to the affidavit. He said the medication and the box for the handgun were at his house. Those claims about his mental state and medication have not been independently confirmed beyond what the search warrant states.

Steve: It was the Flintstone vitamins.

Moi: And severe mommy issues.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Teens take fewer risks with sex and drugs but face new challenges

Steve: Like finding any meaning in our culture ... or purpose in life.

Moi: Good luck with that. No idea what I'd do if I was 18 again. Boggling how the world has changed in just half a century.

Steve: I think these poor kids don't have any future there's no job security there's no purpose or meaning in life other than making a lot of money and since that's being stripped away from them even their left with absolutely nothing but the prospect of being homeless on the streets of some major city which is growing to epidemic proportions

Moi: And it's not even crowded in this part of the world compared to China, India, and all the multi-mega cities. I'm sure plenty of those kids running around in the playgrounds will endure long, harsh lives because suicide isn't on their list of options. The human species will carry on until who-knows-what-for-sure wipes it out. Human history is full of bitter episodes that are somehow survived. Our kind might slog on for many thousands of years for all we know.

Steve: In collective misery.

Moi: All the entitlements we take for granted will be so diminished/extinguished that they won't know any different.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

What Chinese women want: "Little puppies", the new ideal boyfriend type
Moi: One of the last comments made to the last women I was seeing for a brief time: What you really want, Susan, is yourself with a dick.

Wikipedia: Cougar (slang)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cougar_(slang)

WikiHow: How to Know if a Woman is a Cougar
https://www.wikihow.com/Know-if-a-Woman-is-a-Cougar

Feline Scale

Google Search: Cougar Women
https://www.google.com/search?num=20&newwindow=1&client=safari&rls=en&ei=DbwjW6bKN4quzwK04lXwAQ&q=cougar+women&oq=cougar+women&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i10.14155.16160.0.16625.6.6.0.0.0.199.883.0j5.5.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab..1.5.882...0i7i30k1j0i10k1j0i13k1.0.0jphdw1nUNs

Google Search: Cougar vs. Coyote Woman Slang
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=cougar+vs+coyote+woman+slang&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Steve: The thing is, is that women are constantly in a battle with men who are more dominant but the minute they get a submissive man it makes their blood recoil and they can't stand it they hate wimpy men for the most part but they're constantly saying they want one.

Moi: They daily carve away at your soul, and dispose of the husk when there's nothing left. Cart-pushing zombies – yes-dear-you-were-right-I was-wrong-I'm-sorry-it won't-happen-again – are all that's left. It's all so pathetic.

Steve:
A study I read determined that women are attracted to three things in men:

1) Robust Health
2) Maturity
3) Dominance

The study stated that above all else it was dominance ... alpha males ... so they try constantly to beat you into submission ... and the type of men that are prone to try to attract women by pleasing them because.

They're ignorant about their true nature ... succumb to that and become marshmallows ... but it's really a test ... what women really want from a man is for him to respond by pushing back and smacking them down and proving his dominance ... they're actually attracted to that regardless of what comes out of their mouth.
My number one advice to a son if I ever had one would be to tell him to ignore what women say and watch very carefully what they do and how they interact and respond ... most of what they say is just lies and deceptions and tests to try to probe your perimeter ... figure you out ... they're trying to play you like a piano ... what they truly want is evidenced by the way they respond ... the way they act ... and the choices they make.

Women who constantly complain about arrogant men vote for them ... like Trump ... Trump had a significant number of Women Voters which is not being discussed amongst women ... they're are more female voters in this country than men and look who got elected.

Hey, Stella! Hey, Stellaaa!

A Streetcar Named Desire
https://youtu.be/G7a1TxVV4Bg

Moi: Like I keep saying, I am more than happy to be done with the un-fairer sex anymore. Mom is the only woman I give myself over to these daze, and once she's gone, it'll be nothing but superficial interaction with them for whatever time's left.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Musician Wins $260,000 In Lawsuit Against Ex-Girlfriend Who Sabotaged Career

Moi: Treacherous slime. Money he'll never collect, I'm thinking.

Steve: Winning a lawsuit doesn't mean they have the cash ... but he could effectively ruin her life for a significant number of decades by taxing her wages so that for the next 20 years they automatically take about half of her paycheck ... maybe with some luck she'll commit suicide.

Moi: Revenge has a long memory. Good that things seem to have worked our well for Abramovitz. A survivor, a.k.a. hero, in the Genitalia Wars.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

We Compared the Average IQ Scores in All 50 States, and the Results Are Eye-Opening

Moi: And look where Kalforny is. Why am I not surprised?

Steve: LOL ... that's what I thought ... Oregon is more intelligent.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Car Hammock turns your automobile into a suspended camping lounge
https://newatlas.com/carhammock-hammock-inside-vehicle/55047/

Moi: Perfect for the Silicon Valley commuter who needs a few zzz's before he takes on the pot holes and road-ragers.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Suze Orman Says This Is the Age You Should Retire—Not a Month or Year Before
time.com/money/4989314/suze-orman-new-retirement-rule/?xid=partner_CL_Synd

Steve: It's from Suzie Orman! ... it must be True! ... Well, I'll just plan on working until I'm ...
Ugh! ... Oh shit ... My chest ... It's so tight ... Aaaauuuurgh! ... THUD! ... (Sound of body hitting floor).

Moi: Who the fuck is Suze Orman? And why would I bother listenng to someone so foolish? I retired at 58, and would have done it earlier while I had even more of a body and mind if I'd given it more thought.

Steve: She's some famous financial advisor ... who got rich telling you to work till you're 70.

Moi: Just another stupid fucking woman ripping off stupid fucking people who deserve stupid fucking advice.

Steve: My bet is she’s being paid by rich powerful people to tell the plebes to keep working until they die.

Moi: No doubt in this mind. Yet another minion of one-percenters.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

We Are All Getting Dumber, New Science Proves, and No One Is Sure Why
Are our terrible diets, bad schools, tech obsession, or even increasingly trashy media to blame?

Moi: All of the above as far as reasons go, but at the root of it all is the disconnect with the natural world. I'm thinking the downward spiral really took off with the advent of the refrigerator and television.

Am pretty sure division of labor and specialization have something to do with it, as well. The generalist who can do it all is far more savvy, far more trail-smart, is my thinking. Words like gumption, grit, resourcefulness, creativity, critical thinking, stamina – In a world where screens and obesity and absurdity rule, how many in the current generation even know what they mean?
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The Chomsky Challenge for Americans

Moi: Chomsky is always spot-on, but all his clarity for all these years continues to change nothing. We're being consumed by the overlords, the world, and ourselves, waving the flag, cheering ourselves exceptional all the while. The future is already paying the price of our self-absorbed ignorance and stupidity.

The recent photos of Xi and Putin toasting, and the exasperated G6 staring at Trump, says it all.

Two photos that perfectly sum up the state of global leadership in 2018

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Woman sues Nasa over ownership of moon dust vial

Steve: Bought all of this ... except that she wants it for the memory of her father ... she wants the cash.

Moi: Her kids certainly will.

Steve: I've been to Johnson Space Center and walked up to the building where the moon rocks are all kept ... I've also got a piece of a parachute that was in space that was used to slow down the space shuttle when it landed ... I'm in my hotel in Washington DC right now I just went to an award today that I won at the federal government level for exceptional work in the cloud realm one of the only four people in the entire world who received it.

Moi: Congrats! You said when I visited that you'd been nominated, and I'd wondered a few times since what had happened. Nice to be recognized for all your hard work, and your mind.

A link I found on it. Congrats, again.

FedRAMP Five Awards
https://www.fedramp.gov/fedramp-five-awards-accepting-nominations/

Congratulations to the 2018 FedRAMP Five Award Winners!

Large Agency Tech Lead Award: Steven Hunt, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Steven Hunt serves as the IT Governance Lead for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) Enterprise Managed Cloud Computing office, where he has led development and implementation of a robust Enterprise-Class Cloud A&A Framework. The Framework is comprised of leading-edge policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines aligned with FedRAMP, NIST, and Agency requirements and objectives, allowing NASA to minimize compliance burden while enabling secure, mission-supporting services. Steven is an evangelist and supporter of FedRAMP, and demonstrates a consistent willingness to provide input on FedRAMP initiatives to help improve the program.

Passed on the news to Mom, Ann, and John.

How long will you be in Washington? Any chance they'll talk you into that higher position you mentioned?

Steve: Need to get up in five hours for a flight.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a video he sent:

Monty Python's Life of Brian: Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJUhRoBL8M

Steve: One of My Favorites.

Moi: A classic, indeed.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Man goes to prison for attempting to hijack web domain at gunpoint

Moi: Amazing how stupid some people are.

Steve: Yeah … the guy is going to jail for 20 years … for a freaking domain name … Darwin Award Candidate for sure!

Moi: And 'do it for state' sounds pretty millennial-stupid from the get go. Some sort of beyond 'truth or dare' thing, I guess. Ceaselessly amazing what the herd is always coming up with to impress each other.

Where did "do it for state" come from and why does it celebrate stupidity and sex?
https://www.reddit.com/r/OutOfTheLoop/comments/4qta4h/where_did_do_it_for_state_come_from_and_why_does/

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:
The New Arms Race Threatening to Explode in Space

Moi: Fascinating how good our kind is at perpetually shooting itself in the foot. In other words, always be ready for a quick return to old school.

Steve: At the expense of social programs.

Moi: Forget the little people. We're headed back to the Charles Dickens version of human kindness.

Steve: Charles Dickson's London will seem like nirvana compared to what is coming.

Moi: Get that AR yet?

Steve: What is legal in California today ain't worth buying ... may have to keep one on Oregon.

Moi: The toyz you already have will probably do for the time-being.

Steve: Perhaps ... but I would really like to have an AR-15 ... I don’t have any kind of rifle ... and more specifically I want a .223 ... ammo is much cheaper than a .308 and it’s perfect for refining marksmanship skills ... which is what the ignorant masses don’t seem to understand.

Here’s my prediction ... they’ll choke out the use of AR-15s ... so sales of .308 rifles will skyrocket ... and we will essentially have INCREASED the lethality of the overall stock of guns in the U.S. ... great stupid regulators ... how about thinking things through before you implement laws that have no logical reason to exist.

Moi: Still think you should consider a Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle as an entrée into the world of .223. Plenty legal for target practice at any gun range, and just as lethal as any AR-15 in a firefight. Ten-round clips are legal in Kaliforny, and larger clips can be had.

Google Search: Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle
https://www.google.com/search?num=20&newwindow=1&client=safari&rls=en&ei=928yW9-QCoK2tQX--IvQAw&q=Ruger+Mini-14+Ranch+Rifle&oq=Ruger+Mini-14+Ranch+Rifle&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i67k1j0i30k1l5j04.8587.10479.0.12303.2.2.0.0.0.0.196.373.0j2.2.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..0.2.373....0.GQFCjtnwXgg

Steve: Do they have the same stupid limitations that an AR-15 has ... with the “Button Clip” requirement? Or can I use it like a normal human being without being hobbled with ridiculous bolt-ons ... like the “Flipper” hand grip requirement that went into effect this year?

Moi: The Ruger Mini-14 comes with a very legal standard rifle stock, available in a variety of materials. All kinds of accessories are available, some of them illegal in California, but none of them are necessary. Pistol grips offer a certain leverage, but it's just as lethal without one. Mine originally came with a wood stock, but I'm partial to Hogue stocks at this writing.
Google Search: Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle Accessories
https://www.google.com/search?q=Ruger+Mini-14+Ranch+Rifle+Accessories&num=20&newwindow=1&client=safari&rls=en&ei=WhAryW6TSHY2MsQXf8ri4AQ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiy4-Cz6flAhUJIKwKHT9QABQAhUJICygC&biw=867&bih=623

Steve: The links I’m seeing show models that are either 5 rounds or 20 rounds … can you modify this for a 10 round capacity?

Moi: Ruger does not make high-capacity magazines, but there are plenty of aftermarket versions available.

Google Search: Ruger Mini-14 Magazines
https://www.google.com/search?q=Ruger+mini+14+magazines&num=20&newwindow=1&client=safari&rls=en&ei=VXoyW7zwEcnIsQXomaDIAg&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiy4-Cz6flAhUJIKwKHT9QABQAhUJICygC&biw=867&bih=623

Steve: It’s sad that a 10-round magazine is not considered high capacity … in Texas you can mount a 100 round drum on anything with a trigger … and it’s legal … I’ve seen them on Glock pistols in Youtube videos.

Moi: The reality is that most gunfights are over pretty quickly. If you shoot more than a magazine or two, you’re probably at a gun range, and no one’s shooting back.

Steve: Yeah … that’s one context … but it’s sure a pain to have to load 20 magazines … in addition on the former note … I’ve seen articles where some guy shot 11 or 12 rounds before he immobilized the assailant … be a drag to need that extra round or two … probably more of an issue for a pistol … as the accuracy is reduced … hopefully you can aim better than that with a rifle. I’m in favor of the more liberal 17 round or 20 round mag … 10 seems absurdly limiting … just makes a lot of money for the companies selling magazines.
Moi: Am totally ready for just about any kind of scenario you could imagine – bought all kinds of things while they were still Kaliforny-legal – and hope to never be in a life or death situation where I need them.

Steve: Grenade launchers? … with phosphorous loads? … LOL

Moi: I'm a big believer in don't ask, don't tell.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

NFL vs. Millennials: Football Struggles to Bridge the Generation Gap

Steve: Personally I am not attracted to any sport that has significant violence and injury to the participants in it … football … any kind of xoxing … or MMA/UFC. Soccer is a reasonable sport … and far more humane than football.

Moi: It's a gladiator thing that some are beyond-all-rational-thinking attracted to, me included. I was too small and nearsighted to play in high school, but practiced enough to enjoy the strategic and tactical aspects, as well as the violence. No other sport – including boxing, ultimate fighting, or any martial art – calls out to me the way it does.

Steve: Yeah … I really don’t understand people who enjoy watching people beat the shit out of each other for entertainment. It’s barbaric. And takes advantage of the poor people who engage in that.

One thing I’ve noticed that is really bizarre in a “certain type of woman” … of whom I’ve met a few … is that they get sexually aroused watching boxing or other violent sports. One woman … a very attractive one I might add … literally told me point blank that she gets horny watching men beat the shit out of each other … like … what the fuck? … I passed on that shit.

Moi: The kind of women who like it when men fight over them in a bar, or believe jealousy is love. It can sure get twisted.

How The NFL's New Helmet Rule Could Change Football As We Know It

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Wi-Fi security is starting to get its biggest upgrade in over a decade

Steve: Yep ... they'll tell everyone to buy a new router ... and make millions.

Moi:
Sheep Baaa
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33hajppi4yg

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

What It’s Like in the Most Populated Cities in the World

Steve:  Hell on Earth.

Moi:  Have no interest in traveling anymore just to see a bunch of variations of asphalt, cement, steel, and glass.  I can barely stand living in Turlock with it's 80,000 denizens, and the Great Central Valley with its million and a half in Stanislaus County and the two counties north and south.  Don't even want to bother getting into my car anymore to run a few errands.  How you deal living in the Bay Area is beyond me.

Steve:  I wouldn’t call what I do “Living” … it’s “Surviving” … and barely that … Treading Water is another metaphor that comes to mind.  The world … other than for the 1% … has become a mine field of pain and suffering … and we’re fed crumbs to keep us motivated … a delude ourselves into thinking that checking out would be worse … the biggest lie of them all.

Moi:  What a lot of bother being born has been.  All for bits and pieces of pleasure that have grown tired and stale.  Departing crosses my mind pretty much every day in a casual pondering sort of way, and my lot is nothing compared to what so many endure.

Steve:  I know how you feel … I fall down those black holes more frequently these days … with every increasing pain and ache … and then I feel like a whiner because I see how horrific the rest of the world lives … but then I think I can’t understand why anyone in those situation would still be struggling … what’s the point of working in a factory or rice paddy in some polluted hell hole?  I can’t stand the fucking daily grind of the commute and working in front of a computer all day … if I were in their situations for 10 minutes I’d snuff it in a no time at all.

Fucking used to be a pleasure … as were a number of other momentary distractions … but I look back on it … and it’s no different than drugs … what is an orgasm but a momentary head rush? … no wonder so many people are becoming addicted to opioids … you have far more control and the outcome is the same … without alimony … LOL

Moi:  Certainly way too much work for what I get out of it anymore.  Boggling all the time and energy and money we've spent on women in our lives.  And for what, really?

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The Essential Reading List: Dystopian
https://writingcooperative.com/the-essential-reading-list-dystopian-ac832df9b4d2?gi=917a95384815&source=rss----6e9c0c9fd682---4
Moi: I’ve either read or seen the movie of maybe half of these, so it looks like I have some enjoyable homework, dystopian jester that I am.

Steve; Yeah … I noticed that after I sent it … many of these are historical in nature … classics.

Moi: Several of them played key roles in shaping my dystopian mindset.

Dystopia

List of Dystopian Works

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

This Is How 18 Months of Marriage Changes You, According to a Study
https://curiosity.com/topics/this-is-how-18-months-of-marriage-changes-you-according-to-a-study-curiosity/

Moi: What a soul-sucking, domesticating, binding thing relationship with a woman quickly becomes. Has nothing to do with marriage. Every time I left whatever level was going on, it was as if my wings were all crimped down. The newfound freedom was always intoxicating. Thank god my dick no long runs my existence.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Pregnant girlfriend cried and pleaded with boyfriend to stop YouTube stunt moments before shooting him dead

Moi: A 50-caliber bullet into a one-and-a-half-inch-thick book, are you fucking kidding me!? Jesus Christos, how stupid is that? Why the heck is she in jail, is what I don't get. Yes, it was incredibly foolish, but why is she to blame for being pressured by his need to be famous?

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

ICE Carries Out Its Largest Immigration Raid In Recent History, Arresting 146

Steve: What they got to do is arrest people that I own these companies that hire illegal aliens and put them in prison take away their business licenses with no chance of ever operating a business the United States ever again I bet that would squats the illegal immigrants from coming in they
wouldn't have any jobs.

Moi: I worked alongside illegals most my young life. Paying low wages was the only way we could survive on the farm. And I guarantee you that no white folks would ever work that hard. Latinos do the jobs no one else wants to do, and they do them well. I'd like to see these whiny white sereengrazers do even a quarter of the work for twice the wage.

Steve: The reason nobody wants those jobs is because the wages are so low and if they stopped letting illegals work for substandard wages the wages would go up and somebody who's already here would take the job yes that would require raising the price of food but it's better than paying for welfare for all these people I'd rather have the cost of my food go up and have 15 million illegal aliens in my country.

Moi: You're probably the exception. I don't think most people want to pay that kind of price for their food, their clothing, their mechanical repairs, their landscaping, their housecleaning, their laundry, their butchering, their construction, their material possessions, their nights out eating, and whatever else Latinos and other minorities do.

Like I said, I'd like to see these obese, sereengrazing, entitled millennials go out and do a ten-hour day of back-breaking fieldwork on a hundred-degree day. And then do it for weeks and months and years on end for their entire lives. Pay them whatever they ask, I'd wager without fear of losing, that we wouldn't even see even a quarter of the food and material things we every day take for granted wherever we go.

Steve: Circling around on this … and this is in no way critical of what you did to keep your farm afloat … I fully realize that the framework for labor in that industry is what it is … and a single farmer can’t compete without joining the bandwagon … but what we’re doing is paying refugees a substandard living wage … as their alternative is to return to a war torn country where they will be raped and murdered … so we’re taking advantage of them … and in the process … driving down the wages for that work in this country.

I keep hearing people say that Americans don’t want these jobs … the reason is that the illegal labor has driven the wage down to a level where they don’t want that work. If the work paid a reasonable wage … Americans would take the work. This is also not only a farm-landscaper-house cleaning labor pool … they have decimated the construction industry … where all the framers and roofers, et cetera have driven the wage down. This is because they work under the radar with no Social Security or health care or disability, et cetera. This is not only an economic issue … it’s a human rights issue.

My mind is to eliminate the illegal immigration pool of labor … get the wages back to normal … employ American workers in those jobs … and solve two problems with one solution. And yes … we’d have to pay more for our food and houses … but the cost of the illegal immigration is more … on many levels. And taking advantage of people who are classifying themselves as refugees … their own definition … by paying them substandard wages … isn’t ethical.

Just my 2 cents.

Moi: Trouble is, the barbarians are already in the gates. Can't ship them all back.
Steve; Actually … we could … but we don’t have the political will to do so … we have an immigration problem that needs to be solved … I don’t know how to secure the border … but I do know that if you took away their jobs … and put any employer who hires them in prison …. And slapped them with a lifetime restriction against having a business license … they wouldn’t come here anymore … no point in coming here is you can’t get a job.

Moi: Probably better odds getting a crew back from Mars alive.

The sounds of separation – how 8 minutes of audio changed the immigration debate

Steve: Would they prefer electrified razor wire fencing?

Moi: Reminds me of back when I did brandings with cowboy friends when I ran the newspaper in Waterford in the 1980 zone. The cows and calves bawling away when they were separated was quite the scene. Pretty horrific experience to get roped, wrestled down, tied up, inoculated, and castrated. Tractor-driving through peaches and walnuts was all I knew up until then, so working with livestock was quite the eye-opener.

Steve: Castration! … now there's an idea … that would reduce the explosion of offspring from the illegals … and be one hell of a deterrence.

Moi: Who knows what the fascists will come up with before it's over.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Why The American Dream No Longer Includes Home Ownership
https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5b2c5736e4b00295f15ae32a

Moi: No way I could have ever bought a house as transient as I've been all my life. I've never been good at owing money and paying interest, so rent has always been much easier on the state of mind. Being a homeowner has worked out for you because you've stayed with one job, and as you've pointed out, it's cheaper than rent in the Bay Area. But for young people just getting started, it may never make sense unless they really lock into something well-paying and secure for a long haul. And that is likely increasingly doubtful for the majority.

Steve: The young are going to retire the concept of home ownership.

Moi: And retirement, too, methinks. And perhaps a variety of other things before their little window of time is done.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Vegans Suck at Science. Here's The Proof.
Moi: I'm a big believer in not worrying about food past a certain point. I eat and drink pretty much anything, and seem to have survived. Neither vegetarianism or veganism has ever held any appeal. Both clans are awash in silliness.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

“I am not defined by this.” NASA astronaut Jeanette Epps talks about being pulled from the ISS mission

Steve: I can shed some light on this for you in the contacts that I can guarantee that she was not pulled from the mission because she was African-American or because she was a woman in fact in the federal government and NASA in particular affirmative action is so strong that if anything it's the opposite white males are discriminated against at my work in spades if you are a black female you are the cream of the crop the only demographic that is higher than that is Veterans you are at the back of the line if you're a white male so I can guarantee you that she was not pulled for the reasons to suppress a speculated if anything it puts her at the front of the line for any job within the federal government.

Moi: I hear you. That's kind of what I was already figuring. Something else was going on, but what, we'll probably never know.

Steve: The problem I have with the Left is that not only are they the primary drivers for racism … sexism … and every other “ism” … essentially against anything white or Male … or old … oh yeah … I forgot age-ism … they are completely ignorant of their own prejudice … they’ve injected into our legal and fiscal policies … and they automatically label anything that effects any other demographic as biased against them … when there could be perfectly viable reasons to the contrary.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Young Americans are waking up to their grim financial future

Moi: I suspect retirement will not even be a possibility at some point in the not too distant future. Young people are fucked. If we think suicide stats are bad now, just wait.

Steve: Distant Future? ... given what I'm finding out in the last few days regarding my retirement benefits and job I don't see retirement as a possibility for me in my lifetime.

Moi: Certainly not in any kind of luxurious, stress-free lifestyle.

Steve: Our culture if fueled by stress ... I'm surprised it's not a commodity sold on the New York Stock Exchange.
Moi: We are definitely one fucked-up culture.

Steve: Why do you think coffee has been legal all these years and pot illegal? My theory is always been that it's simply because they think it would lower productivity which it probably would they don't want a bunch of people laying around half asleep on the couch eating boxes of Cocoa Puffs they want you to be all wound up and stressed out and jittery so that you keep moving and cranking and making the money until the day you die

Moi: Exactly so. Anything that wires up or numbs down is good. Anything that relaxes or awakens is bad.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an inquiry I sent:

Moi: So what's the new job?

Steve: Too overworked and stressed. Today I got up at 5 a.m., and am just getting home.

Moi: Alas, that's what I was afraid was happening. Are you still able to stay home some daze?

Steve: There's far worse shit that I've recently found out ... Trump is trying to dismantle Federal employee pensions ... health care ... many other really bad things ... so I've worked my entire life ... for them ... and they're going to take away what they've promised us all those years.

This is really bad.

Blurry eyes ... some daze?

Moi: The one-percenter have lost sight of everything that our society needs to function smoothly. Their greed knows no bounds, and Trump is the Trojan Horse leading the charge to dismantle the middle class.

Steve: I'm dead serious about this I went to a union meeting yesterday and there were four pages of shit that's being shoved through by the Trump Administration they are essentially taking away what we have worked for 4:30 or 40 years at the very end of your career which is just not right this is going to be catastrophic it means that basically you won't be able to survive on your pension because they're not going to give you any cost of living increases which means in 10 or 20 years it's worth half what it was when you retired they're going to make you pay so much for your health benefits you won't be able to afford them.

Moi: I hear you, I get it. The future is going to be a very fucked up piece of work. The security net that we grew up believing would be there when our generation retired is being ripped to shreds. The infrastructure our society takes for granted is falling into disrepair in every way. Imagine the Charles Dickens world all these kids running around in the playgrounds will have to endure. Pretty amazing to watch it unravel so quickly.

Steve: There's more on top of this ... it was mind boggling ... they're also targeting Social
Security Medicare and disability payments. On top of the above, they're also cutting back medical leave and vacation, as well as holidays, to make it miserable to work for the government.

Moi: The Deplorables are in charge.

So what's the new job you've taken on? And are you still able to stay home some days?

Steve: More bad news today ... I'll be lucky if they don't fire all NASA employees at my center ... they're dismantling the entire federal government.

Moi: Jesus Christos, what a cluster Trump and his deplorables have made of things. I'm still convinced he's working for the Russians and Chinese to bring down our little corner of the world. The Moscovian Candidate, indeed.

Steve: He's going to destroy the federal government in ways that are incomprehensible. In addition to destroying our International relationships, the United States will be left in tattered shambles by the time he gets out. We'll be lucky if we don't get into a major war. He's the biggest security threat to this country we've ever seen.

Moi: What an astounding slice of history we are getting to witness. New Rome ripped and shredded at every seam. Boggling.

Steve: Fucking nuke it all and get it over with ... at least I'd finally be at rest ... insomnia is killing me.

Moi: Pretty rough seeing everything you've worked so hard for, get ripped to shreds by the megalomania of a moron. The face of deplorabilia personified.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles he sent:

Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century

What’s inside Trump’s major government overhaul

Moi: Yowza, definitely a new order is in the work. What will November think? Curious that I'm not seeing anything about it on my Google News feed. Found it in a search, but the big media outfits seem surprisingly mum, so far. Will be interesting to watch the weekend unfold.

Steve: It's a massive reorganization of the government ... they must be stupid if they don't realize that.

Moi: It will sound good to all the anti-government folks who want things trimmed down. The
ones who don't care about anything to do with science, education, healthcare, social services, and the like.

Steve: Until they want those services. These people ranting and raving and cheering at Trump rallies don't realize that all of their services are going to be cut off but not going to have any health care no social security and there's no way in hell he can bring their jobs back like he's probably saying it's simply impossible all this really amounts to is a massive transfer of wealth two people who are really obscenely rich they've cut the taxes on the wealthy and then I'm making up for it by cutting the services on the poor it's obscene.

Moi: Boggling, indeed. What trip to watch everything we've taken for granted evaporate so quickly. And the irony is, as you say, that his deplorables still have no friggin' clue what they've unleashed upon their little worlds.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Dear Europe, if you want stop Trump, sanction his companies
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/22/europe-trump-sanction-companies

Moi: You mean they aren't already!?

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

With three words, President Trump fortifies a flawed perception about NASA
"We're reopening NASA," president says at a campaign rally.
https://arstechnica.com/science/2018/06/trump-were-reopening-nasa-agency-has-fought-that-misconception-for-years/

Steve: Just had my performance review with my supervisor ... 5th or 6th year in a row ... maybe 7 ... can't remember ... for Substantially Exceeds Rating ... highest you can get ... here's his write up in my review:

"Steve Hunt took on one the most complex tasks associated with cloud computing that exists today in enterprise class computing. Specifically, he was tasked with designing and developing an Agency-level, Enterprise Grade cloud Accreditation and Authorization approach that addresses both IaaS and SaaS. He has worked tirelessly on this for several years, and during this performance period, he completed the effort. It was a herculean-level undertaking, supported by a team led by Steve, with a deliverable that is arguably still ahead of its time, making it difficult to appreciate.

There were many constraints associated with the effort, including changing requirements, changing NASA tools sets, evolving FedRAMP guidance, and a vendor community that does not yet fully understand security in the cloud age. Despite all this, Steve persevered and developed an elegant solution, one for which the need is just being realized outside of EMCC. His contribution via this deliverable is one of the most significant EMCC achievements to date.
Further, Steve has operated in his role as the EMCC Cloud Security Compliance Lead with arguably the most comprehensive knowledge of the FedRAMP program that exists as part of the FedRAMP Program, itself. He regularly advised both the FedRAMP PMO on improvements to FedRAMP process. He also frequently advised vendors with cloud services of interest to NASA on how to align with the FedRAMP requirements to ensure NASA could meet its FedRAMP obligations. Throughout this period, Steve also provided FedRAMP guidance to large NASA projects, such as the Office 365 Implementation team. His associates at IV&V view Steve as the authority on NASA cloud computing security compliance and frequently request his advice when supporting NASA using the very FedRAMP security assessment guidance developed by Steve and his team. From an effort perspective, Steve always went above and beyond what most NASA employees would do to ensure NASA’s requirement are met. He leveraged his network of cloud security experts across NASA for guidance, and he earned the respect of the NASA’s current Senior Agency Information Security Official after briefing him on the then in-development Cloud A&A approach. As just one way to recognize his contributions, Steve was nominated by at least two parties within NASA (ARC Code IQ as Steve directly supported) for a major FedRAMP Agency award.

All in all, Steve's contributions to the Agency EMCC team, both in previous years, and certainly this year, are extremely significant."

Moi: Nice to be recognized with such articulation. Congrats, again. Hopefully, NASA won't be closed down anytime ever.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on a series of articles I sent:

We’re Not Better Than This. But We Can Try to Be

You Listened To Children Crying At The Border. Sheriffs Listened To Kirstjen Nielsen.
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/children-crying-border-sheriffs-kirstjen-nielsen_us_5b2820a0e4b0f0b9e9a40eba

Why are so many migrants crossing the U.S. border? It often starts with an escape from violence in Central America

Steve: I have no problem whatsoever with what they're doing at the border I'm so sick and tired of the left manipulating people's feelings and try to vilify everybody on the right and the right doing the same to the left all we're trying to do is keep people from coming across the border illegally and they're turning us into monsters for doing so I wish all these people had to house 50 of these people in their backyard and take care of him so that they would see what it's like for us to have to pay for.

Moi: For me it's less about what they're doing than how they're doing it. What a horror story so many places are down south of us, that so many are desperate enough to go through such a journey with so little possibility of entering our ironic Shangri-La.
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Former astronaut doubts that NASA or SpaceX will make it to Mars with their shiny new rockets

Steve: Making it there isn't the hard part ... it's making it there alive ... and getting back.

Moi: Every aspect is so friggin' absurd that it's boggling that anyone is even contemplating it seriously. Can't even imagine being cooped up with a handful of people in a tin can for that long. Just a suicide mission from the get-go.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Why We Need To Talk About Burnout In The Tech Industry

Moi: Trouble is, once someone's burnt out, I'm doubtful there's really any getting back to any meaningful balance. I've never lasted long at any place I've worked, and in the few times I did go back, I was quickly faced with the reality of why I left in the first place.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

One-third of adults in U.S. taking drugs that may cause depression, study finds

Steve: That's depressing ... LOL

Moi: I've long suspected that some friends of mine who take piles of prescriptions every day would do well to do the cold turkey for a bit to see what happens.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

For sale: (1) California ghost town

Steve: That's the cost of a one-bedroom condo in the bay area.

Moi: Good spread for anyone wanting to play it out in hermit mode. Some Silicon Valley type will probably buy it on a lark.
Steve: New location for Burning Man 2

Moi: If Kaliforny would allow it. I think Nevada is probably a bit more lenient about such things.

A follow-up a few months later on what happened with the property:

Historic California ghost town sells for $1.4M on Friday the 13th
www.kcra.com/article/historic-california-ghost-town-sells-for-dollar14m-on-friday-the-13th/22182076

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Is the Global Economy Just a Giant Debt Scam? Here's What the Financial Elite Doesn't Want You to Know

Moi: Have never been much of one for owing anybody anything, so It's all well beyond my range of relevance. Our kind is just one big clusterfuck. One of these daze I will be departing for good, and you can put your money down that I won't be even glancing back.

Steve: This guy was essentially calling out the elephant in the room and stating that the entire economic system is a big house of cards it's going to come Crashing Down and that the financial issues that Greece was having we're not specific to Greece but more systemic to the global economy and it's just a matter of time.

Moi: I understood what he is saying, and what I'm saying is what goes up must come down – house of cards and dominos are the standard metaphors – and oh well and so it goes. Not something I'm losing sleep over. I'll stick around for as long as its tolerable, and then sayonara cruel world.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

DMT: The Spirit Molecule
https://youtu.be/LtT6Xkk-kzk

Moi: Don't think I've heard of DMT, but I've done everything else I could get my hands on times beyond counting. As far as I'm concerned, anything and everything should be available to anyone who is on an exploratory journey.

Steve: From what I've read I don't think there's a significant risks in terms of people becoming addicted to things like hallucinogens they simply don't lend themselves to that type of repetitive use the issues we have in our culture have more to do with things like cocaine and meth and opioids which are ravaging entire communities I don't know what the answer is but it's terrible to see what things like methamphetamines do to people I feel somewhat like you but the problem is
coffers of communities that go broke trying to take care of these people.

Moi: The addicts aren't the people I'm talking about. The addictive mind will find one thing or another to latch onto. Meth is just one of the current fads. It was crack cocaine only a decade or so ago, and opium dens were the craze long before we showed up for our little window of time. Food, alcohol, religion, politics, work, you name it, there will always be minds that do the lemming thing. It takes a lot of band-aides, ruins a lot of people who are connected to them, but there is really no solution to it.

In case you haven't seen it, this is a fun little website:

The Art of Manliness
https://www.artofmanliness.com/category/a-mans-life/

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The risk of 'contagion' after suicides is real

Suicide Rates in The US Are Increasing at a Staggering Rate, And No Group Is Protected

Too Many Men Are Dying By Suicide
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/opinion-eil-men-suicide_us_5b1b0aebe4b09d7a3d727142

Steve: The Media promotes contagion in every volatile situation ... 90% of these mass shootings would never have happened otherwise.

Moi: They've probably set the stage for most the wackiness that this world endures. Trump would never have made it to the White House without all the free press he was given.

Steve: Look at the ratio between male and female suicides in the fourth paragraph It's 3 and 1/2 to 4 times as high as it is for women.

Moi: Probably because we're less likely to put up with bullshit past a certain point, and better at getting it done once we make the decision.

Steve: Driven to it by women to begin with.

Moi: Speaking of women, what's happening with the one up in Portland?

Steve: She was here last week ... enjoyed the company ... but am usually left fatigued ... takes a couple days to recover.

Moi: Must be a big drain when she has several months of emotion to unleash in such a quick
burst.

Steve: Contagion in action.

After Celebrity Deaths, Suicide Hotline Calls Jump 25%

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

US suicide rates increased more than 25% since 1999, CDC says

Steve: Democrats every one ... can't blame them.

Moi: The end of entitlement is a scary thing.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Blue Mind: Why Being Around Water is So Good for Our Psyches
https://experiencelife.com/article/blue-mind/

Moi: Water has always drawn me: Oceans, rivers, lakes, canals, swimming pools. Had the canal across the road when I was a kid. Spend time doing what I call Aqua Chi almost every day at my club. It is most definitely a great mind-body meditation.

Steve: Me, too. I absolutely love the beach and the ocean which is why I was a windsurfer hardcore for 15 years it literally broke my heart and my soul to have to stop doing that it took me about 10 years to get over it I was literally depressed because I couldn't windsurf anymore.

Moi: I did some sailing, but it always seemed to me that windsurfing took wind and water to a whole different level.

Steve: It makes you one with both ... you literally lose all sense of self and consciousness, and are completely immersed and connected with nature in a way I've never experienced with any other activity ... like one continuous orgasm for hours.

Moi: That's how it looks from the shore. Alas that I missed my youthful window of opportunity.

Steve: It hurt more to let go of windsurfing than it did to divorce my wife … I'll take Mother Nature over a mind-fucking woman any day of the week.

Moi: And motorcycles, too.

They're more reliable ... as are many things ... a good dog is more loyal, loving, and faithful.
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

The Truth About Saturated Fat

Moi: Stick with things nature created, foods that we evolved eating. Avoid packaged stuff, and anything that has more syllables than a healthy tongue easily bears.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Three Reasons the Anti-Gun Crowd Remains Quiet About the Oklahoma Restaurant Shooting

Moi: True, true, but how to minority report the mentally ill?

Minority Report

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

PC police won’t let us use these words anymore
https://nypost.com/2018/05/26/pc-police-wont-let-us-use-these-words-anymore/?utm_campaign=partnerfeed&utm_medium=syndicated&utm_source=flipboard

Moi: My next t-shirt: Fuck Your Political Correctness

political correctness |pəˈlidəkəl kaˈrek(t)nəs|  
(also political correctitude)  
noun  
the avoidance, often considered as taken to extremes, of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against.

Wikipedia: Political Correctness
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_correctness

Google Search: Political Correctness
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=political+correctness&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Google Images: Fuck Political Correctness
https://www.google.com/search?q=fuck+political+correctness&client=safari&rls=en&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjrkoeaZqLzJAhWKlYgKHeiPBHgQ_AUIBygB&biw=1035&bih=716#imgrc=W02NuhtcmAVXDM%3A
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

A century on, why are we forgetting the deaths of 100 million

Moi: Rest assured that Mother Nature will not rest until she finds a way to destroy us all.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Mike Meru Has $1 Million in Student Loans. How Did That Happen?
https://www.wsj.com/articles/mike-meru-has-1-million-in-student-loans-how-did-that-happen-1527252975

Steve: “May” never pay back? … they “will absolutely” never pay back. And the aggregate outstanding Student Loan debt right now is over a Trillion and growing … and most of that was accelerated by bogus for profit colleges … like the one my ex girlfriend worked for … I heard what was going on and what a scam it was directly from her … one reason why I couldn’t stomach being with her anymore.

That amount of debt … plus … the Trillions in credit card debt in this country … that will never be paid back … and will buckle the economy when everyone starts to default on it … will dwarf what triggered the last recession … AND … there are not more tricks in the back of the Feds to fix it this time. They borrowed 6 Trillion last time … that is still owed … and they can’t lower rates anymore than they have for the last decade … which has trashed everyone’s retirement accounts.

So the house of cards is piled high … and the foundation is crumbling … no one seems to be aware of just how fucked we are … it’s just a matter of time … everyone seems to think the economy is going well because the stock market went up last year … but that will all blow up in smoke when this hits the fan.

I give it another few years at most … as soon as a democrat gets in office everyone will panic … and you can kiss the economy good bye.

Moi: Well, I figure Trump's going to be in there another four, so no worries about the Dems until 2024, maybe more if they don't get their act together.

Hopefully, by the time it all crashes and burns, you'll be retired and fortified up in Eugene for whatever duration you're fated to endure.

Steve: If it gets really bad what will happen is all the money will get devalued like it has in Brazil and Venezuela and places like that so it doesn't matter how much money you have saved in your bank account it'll all be worth was it will get to the point where it'll cost $1,000 for a loaf of bread.
Moi: That's why I'm diversified in gold and silver and guns and other such things. Got no debt, a van, and plenty of camping gear, too.

And a helium tank if it gets beyond all repair.

Steve: When the financial system starts to collapse I'll log on to my computer immediately and take my entire savings and apply to my house payment the money will be worthless and the only thing of any value is paying off my mortgage so that I have the house paid off once that's done all I need is food and the ability to pay property taxes.

Moi: At this point, I'd have Mom to worry about, but other than that, we're both free and clear, and able to endure far more than anyone with a wife and children.

Meanwhile, off to the gym ... Staying in shape for Armageddon.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

James Packer looks cheery as he boards super yacht with friends in Cabo San Lucas ... after checking himself out of $35,000-a-week psychiatric hospital following mental breakdown http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-5825979/James-Packer-boards-giant-yacht-friends-Cabo-San-Lucas.html

Steve: I'm sorry and I don't mean to sound callous but I have a problem with empathizing with people who are billionaires who have issues with dealing with life ... they should try dealing with life from the perspective of somebody who's on the border of being homeless.

Moi: Thirty-five grand a week!? Jesus Christos, just go out and take a few long walks by yourself out on a mountain trail without an iPod crammed in your ear. Kriminies, what a wacko friggin' world.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

CNN's Anthony Bourdain dead at 61 https://a.msn.com/r/2/AAyo1er?m=en-us&a=1

Heroin, depression, and getting sober: Anthony Bourdain was always open about battling demons https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/heroin-depression-getting-sober-anthony-bourdain-always-open-battling-demons-171835934.html

A Community Organizer on How Anthony Bourdain Brought His Globe-Trotting Curiosity to an Overlooked Corner of America time.com/5306228/anthony-bourdain-curiosity-queens/

Anthony Bourdain on New Jersey and why his show stands out in one of his last interviews

Twitter reacts to the death of Anthony Bourdain

Chef Edward Lee: Bourdain changed my life

Our 15 Favorite Episodes of Anthony Bourdain’s TV Shows

Anthony Bourdain, CNN host and celebrity chef, hanged himself with bathrobe belt, prosecutors say

Anthony Bourdain was ‘regularly suicidal’ after end of first marriage
https://pagesix.com/2018/06/09/anthony-bourdain-was-regularly-suicidal-after-end-of-first-marriage/

The troubling signs leading up to Anthony Bourdain’s suicide

The restaurant industry grapples with demons of addiction, mental illness

Moi: Have never really watched the show except for a few glimpses and the occasional headline, but I think a recent viewing said to me this guy isn’t looking healthy. Way too skinny, way too many tats, something’s off.

Steve: His show was excellent ... but he committed suicide ... odd ... had everything going for him ...
or so it seemed.

Moi: I think the drive it takes for fame and fortune and power is often energized by a lot of well-disguised demons.

Steve: He has a very interesting life story ... commendable in that regard ... he started out as a junkie in the bowels of NYC’s restaurant business ... wrote a best seller about it ... and his life changed ... I think he’s been carrying that baggage his entire life ... and the tide may have overcome him in the end.
Moi: From the photo posted in the article, I'd say that he was still very much into drugs. May even have been an accidental overdose. Heroin can be tricky stuff.

Steve: It’s possible he had some form of cancer or something … and checked out … I know I would … all the money in the world can’t save you in the end … only make you more comfortable … beats dying in a cardboard box on the streets of Detroit.

Moi: Given the media's ability to feed our voracious curiosisty, I'm sure we'll know more about his innermost reality in a very few daze. Sounds like he was awash in intensity his entire life.

Steve: He hung himself with the bathrobe belt ... from a posh hotel in France ... a metaphor for feeling suffocated by the grandiosity of what he had built.

Moi: Alas that he'll never read all the fine things people are writing about his legacy. From Proximo in the movie Gladiator: We are nothing but dust and shadows. Dust and shadows!

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a link he sent:

Amazon: The Silencing: How the Left is Killing Free Speech

Moi: The Democrats are likely in for a long, cold power outage.

A couple of my ditties on ethics that I have likely passed your direction before: “Chances are your nose looks best on your own face” and “Ethics is the luxury of a full belly and a safe harbor.”

Steve: Yep … one of my favorite … and I believe insightful movies … expressed as a comedy … is Trading Places … with Eddie Murphy and Dan Acaroid … position in life influences ones politics … I’ve seen many of my liberal friends … and family … turn into conservatives for this reason … as well as others.

Moi: The permutations of greed are relatively predictable.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Romney predicts 4 more years for Trump

Moi: Much to the dismay of all the anti-Trumpers in my zone, I've been saying that since the first month he took office. Rome is falling to mob rule, and he's the Caesar they've been longing for.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Curiosity Rover Finds Ancient 'Building Blocks for Life' on Mars

Moi: But what about filling potholes here on Earth?

Steve: High Tech Legos.

Moi: My guess is there are lots and lots of building blocks out there, but so what? It might mean something if we hadn't destroyed so much of our own world. What a bankrupt species we are.

Steve: Like looking at new cars ... while not maintaining the one you have ... LOL

Moi: Exactly so. Irony and paradox rule.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Border arrests exceed 50,000 for third month in a row

Steve:
1) Immigration is an issue I agree with Trump on.
2) Wish he could round up all the 15 million illegals already here and send then back.
3) Mine fields would be cheaper than a wall.

Moi: Who knows what he'll do before he's done. Forget the wall and mines. I'd put two army groups down there and call border patrol a training exercise, with occasional sorties against any cartels that dared pop their heads up.

My issue with Trump is entirely about him being a complete and utter moron and degenerate. Toxic to the nth degrees. I have absolutely no respect for him either as a man or a human being.

Steve: Yes ... it's unfortunate ... cuz he's accurately identified a number of real issues ... but his ability to mitigate them is flawed.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Man Sues CVS For Telling Wife He Had Viagra Prescription
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cvs-michael-feinberg-viagra_us_5b155dcee4b02143b7cecbd0

Steve: All I can say is if his wife finding out that he uses Viagra causes a rift in their marriage
then the marriage is pretty flimsy to begin with ... she should be happy that the guy is willing to put any kind of effort into getting his dick up so he can make her happy.

Moi: Assuming he was using it for her benefit. The article is a little incomplete.

Steve: Yeah ... I suppose if he hadn't fucked her in 3 years ... the context would be totally different.

Moi: Even if I were still at my peak, I can't imagine having sex with most the women that are out there anymore. So much fat, and most of them, sadly, just plain ugly from the get-go. Even the strongest potions wouldn't get a rise out of me anymore. With the eye I have now, I'd probably be celibate if I was starting over. It's like friggin' Halloween every day anymore.

Steve: Hence the robot sex workets ... LOL

Moi: Exactly so. Very healthy ... for men ... who just want to get their rocks off with a "shut-the-fuck-up" fantasy girl. Robots for women will have to be emotionalized with some sort of "I-love-you-honey" Chatty Cathy pull-string.

Steve: Yeah ... but you can't robotize power and wealth ... the woman's power will be diminished.

Moi: Getting cast into the nonessential pile will be like burkizing without the burka.

Steve: Uber and sex robot companies will collaborate to form order from your phone services ... rent by the hour not buy.

Moi: It's probably already happening under the radar, at least with some of those life-size manikins.

Steve: With all the plastic surgery and fake parts women install these days ... the only difference between them and a robot ... is the brain ... and you don't need that for purely sexual purposes.

Moi: And without the risk of the welfare department tapping into your paycheck for child support. What's not mentally healthy about that? And sleep alone, too. Definitely win-win for men.

* * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

NASA’s priorities appear to be out of whack with what the public wants

Steve: Seems to indicate the Public is more intelligent than I used to think … my core priorities would be to simply study the Cosmos for fundamental knowledge regarding What and Why is out there … and apply any science or knowledge we gain to benefit life on Earth … i.e. Climate
Change and other faucets of what comes under the “Earth Sciences” umbrella. Seems to make sense to me to try to preserve this planet as a first priority … over trying to populate others.

Moi: Makes sense to me. Star Wars, Star Trek, and all things Asimov and Heinlein are fun on paper and the big screen, but the reality of physics and biology have alternative facts in store.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Claims about social benefits of sex robots greatly overstated, say experts

Steve:
1. I absolutely believe this will be the best thing since sliced bread ... and will free men from the inherent manipulations of women who use sex to enslave men.
2. This article is written by women who feel threatened by that. Need I say more.

Moi: Define health benefits.

Steve: Anything that alleviates the grating monotonous drone of a women's voice when she obsessively badgers a man into near suicidal desires ... that doesn't contain alcohol, barbiturates, or opiates.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

A Second American Civil War?
http://robertreich.org/post/174535949180?curator=MediaREDEF

Moi: Keep an eye out for brown shirts goose-stepping down dark alleys.

* * * *

Back and forth response to an invitation from Ninos David to travel with him for a month to Bangkok or Dubai or Taipei in November:

Taipei Taoyuan Airport Guide & Reviews
https://www.sleepinginairports.net/asia/taipei.htm

EVA Air America

Yo, Ninos,

Been thinking quite a bit about your invitation to wander across the world, and I think I'm going to have to decline. Along with not wanting to leave Mom and Studio 101 unattended for that length of time, I have too many physical issues going on, especially in the upper back and neck. No way could I easily handle long flights, strange beds, and who-knows-what sundry
unknowns. My sense of adventure at this stage of the game is not strong enough to override all the pain and bother that this sort of road trip would inflict. Would like to support your wanting to travel internationally one last time, but I'm just not enthusiastic about adding any more suffering to my existence than the day-to-day road ahead already has in store. Hope you can find someone else, or chance going it alone.

Hanging at the BAC in the lobby on the east side of the pool if you're around and about.

Ciao, ciao,

M

Ninos: Wow! That essay can win a literary award ... Anyway, thank you for your realistic thought and I understand your concerns .... For me everyday my concerns are intensified ... That is why I have not been moving around .... Age, health issues, and the world situation have had dramatic impact on all of us .... Let us see what we can do within California.

Moi: Alas that languid day trips are about all either of us can manage easily anymore.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

7 Ways Being Alone Changes Your Brain, According To Science
https://www.bustle.com/p/7-ways-being-alone-changes-your-brain-according-to-science-9128661

Moi: Have always been what I've come to call a "sociable loner." Can't be around people all the time, but am not a hermit, either. Generally think I've struck a pretty fair balance in both work and play in this existence.

* * * *

This Timeline Shows The Entire History of The Universe, And Where It's Headed

Le Fichier Circulaire de Michaël
https://www.facebook.com/LeFichierCirculaireDeMichael/photos/a.33437443348372.79379.316688076431072/1633777263408076/?type=3&theater

David: Axial tilt reversal is, of course, absolute nonsense. The "sciencealert" source is not credible.

Moi: Big picture, Dave, big picture.

David: Big nonsense, you mean. You know what axial tilt is, don't you? The earth spins, the center of that spin can be described as its axis. In the case of planet earth, in comparison to the planet's orbit and the orbit's relationship to the sun, this spin-axis has an angle of 23.5 degrees. Evidence strongly suggests that this tilt can change a bit over time, between about 22 and 24.5 degrees. But it doesn't reverse. Never has, never will. The relationship of this axis to the sun
does "reverse", that happens every year. Its why we have seasons. The big picture here is that the authors of this 'meme' are completely clueless. They don't know what they're talking about. Only a disreputable site like "sciencealert" (known for its click-bait nonsense) would publish it. There's absolutely no content of any significance here. You link a bunch of stuff together and imply some cosmic significance to it. Pseudo-science. The dumbing down of humanity. Bunk. A lie. I hate lies more than anything else, and that's at the end of the day what this is. A lie.

Moi: So how's Tom doing? (A reference to another mutual friend who has stopped interacting with Dave because of his zealous commentary towards posts made by Tom’s wife).

Not likely your School of Emotional Rationalism is ever going to make it into the history books, Dave. What I posted was just a small screenshot of the much larger graphic, which I'm not sure you even looked at. What I like is the way it shows what a scratch humankind is in the play of the universe. I don't need for it to be totally-logically-scientifically-according-to-Hughes accurate, or politically correct according to your self-righteous-lone-ranger-I've-got-a-piece-of-paper-from-Berkeley bullshit. So it goes, deal with it, get over it, move on.

Obviously, I'm a little weary of your rants on my timeline, so here's notice that I'm going to be taking a break from your world for the duration. Ta-ta for now.

David: You put it out on a public (or at least semi-public) platform. My 'rant' is intended to draw attention to a falsehood. You should take the post down.

Moi: I'm with Tom. Bye-bye, Dave.

Shared my frustration with Bruce Styles on the side:

Bruce (Sidebar): Jebus ... I had a few words with Dave a while back. I hope he got the drift of the conversation.

Moi (Sidebar): Not holding my breath. Yes, the times are their usual wacko, but there's nothing any of us can do about it, never has been, never will be, so I have no need for him to shit on me. My response might be a little harsh, but oh well. I'm afraid Dave has committed the most grievous of sins: He has become an insufferable boor, and is now sentenced to Facebook purgatory. So I am with Tom. No, Dave, you are not Zorro (Referring to the profile pic Dave posted of Zorro overwhelming an opponent). You might be the other guy, though.

Bruce: Notwithstanding this kerfuffle, the chart is a fascinating view based on current scholarship of the origins and possible fate of the universe. Certainly would not throw out the whole based on one complaint. It can certainly soundly stand as a hypothesis and guide for further study.

Bruce: Fascinating, seems this is a demonstrated phenomena that has likely happened countless times to whit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axial_precession#Polar_shift_and_equinoxes_shift

Bruce: And of course polar shifts have occurred with great frequency: http://earthsky.org/earth/magnetic-pole-reversal-ahead
Dave: Magnetic pole reversal has nothing to do with the earth's axis.

Dave: I have deleted my previous comment and apologize for my over-reaction and zealotry.

Moi: Understandable in these Trumpian times.

Bruce (Sidebar): You know, I was kind of surprised by his over-the-top reaction to that post so have been needling him a bit – you know pointing out the obvious. I took a closer look at the reference you cited, it's a "respectable" science news aggregator site, staff are pretty capable and on the up and up, so pointed that out to Dave. You may have noticed he back-peddled and conceded he was wrong. Frankly, I have to call him on that crap for his own sake.

I think, in this current climate, political climate, people in general feel pretty out of control (as if we are ever in control). Seems to me that's Dave's problem, the news daily is just awful. Trump is a nightmare and there's really not much anyone can do about it. I think Dave has a sense of total lack of control and that sets him off. So one of his "deals" is to over react to what he sees as fake news and inaccurate quotes. The room or playground monitor shtick get's old … It's just Facebook fer chrisakes, Dave … Perspective.

* * * *

Back and forth with Bruce Styles on buying a travel trailer:

Bruce: So I may be buying a travel trailer. I know you bought and sold several RVs over the years. What is the safest process for doing that title transfer and the money exchange? At some point, I have to hook the trailer up of course, but how to exchange the money, get the title, and get out of there in one piece? It's going to be about an $8000 transaction. I was going to suggest to the guy that we meet at the bank, but how the heck do I already have the trailer hooked up and ready to go without returning to his place to get the trailer? any insight would be welcome.

Thanks, Bruce

Moi: Gosh, it's been so long I can hardly remember how I bought the Toyota Dolphin. And the Chevy Dolphin was through a dealer. And way back before both those, I picked up an Airstream trailer that I parked behind my parents place. Can't remember if I rented or borrowed a pickup to haul it. Also had a couple sailboats with trailers.

As far as the DMV paperwork goes, I think any title transfer pretty much works the same as any vehicle. You give them the money; they sign over the pink slip. Should be pretty straightforward, unless there's something shady about whoever you're picking it up from.

How about renting a pickup, hooking it up to the trailer, and driving to the bank to do the transfer? Or maybe have whoever you're buying it from bring it over to your place, and then go down to the bank to do the paperwork..

Bruce: Well I have my Toyota Tundra. I just need to confirm it has a Class IV hitch. Will likely hook up, go to bank with seller following and do the transaction there. The guy works in Chico,
the trailer is at his mother's house in Magalia in the hills.

Will be interesting. It's a Hi-Lo, the idea being might be able to store it in our garage, if I can ever get that cleaned out.

2009 Hi-Lo 24 - $9500 (Magalia)

He's "letting it go" for $8000.

Bruce

Moi: Looks good. Nice and clean. The advantage of buying something from older generations. Magalia's a bit of a winding road journey, but towing should be no problem with the Tundra and your farm boy roots. You must have a pretty big garage to fit it, but keeping it out of the elements is a good idea to minimize leaks and such. A tarp with bungee cords also works. Make sure you have the right wiring for lights. Have him take some pics of the hook-ups before you head up there.

Bruce: Yeah, last week I had a electronic brake booster installed in the truck and at the same time a seven prong electrical connector which is required for trailers so that it'll actuate the electric brakes on the trailer.

So I was kind of getting ready to buy something like this. The concern with this trailer is, the guy said it was stored outside under trees, so it was in the shade, as if that was an advantage. Needless to say being in the elements the tires are probably pretty well shot. I'm also assuming it's going to need new marine deep cycle batteries. I'm a little concerned if they didn't winterize it the gray water and black water tanks might be a mess. But they wanted 9500 I offered 7500, he said he and his brother want 8000. I can go for that.

Those HiLo trailers seem to maintain their value over time. Slap some wax on it, spiff it up and it should be worth the purchase price for at least five year.

I might be kidding myself, but I am thinking it might be my portable Walden Pond cabin.

Will see.

Bruce

Moi: I've always enjoyed my cabin-on-wheels living. The mobility and simplicity of a small cave is a very pleasant way to gypsy. At this writing, I'm more into the thought of a camper van. Easier driving, easier parking, doesn't require a campsite, great way to do urban camping. much cheaper than motels. My Aerostar will do for now, but when Mom passes, my lifestyle may move who-knows-what-direction. Might move up to the north coast of Kalifornia, or someplace inland like Eugene, or maybe just pack it all away and wander about the world for a bit.

Google Search: Camper Vans
Don't think I'd want to get a VW camper – prefer something more six or eight cylinder – but some of these certainly might be tempting:

14 of the Coolest Custom VW Campervans Ever Built

Bruce: Nyet on the VW. Just say no.

Moi: The family beetle during high school and junior college, and the van that transported me from Turlock to Ojai to Chico during the late 80's, were taste enough for this and all future lifetimes.

Bruce: Well, I should say they're kind of fun, but the minute, the very minute the ownership rolls over to the 6th year you've got to sell ASAP because every thing that could possibly go wrong will.

Moi: The van cost me a pretty penny to learn that sobering fact, but it got me to Chico before it died, so I buried it content.

Bruce: Uhm, err, are you available on Saturday or Sunday? For a ridiculous adventure in Magalia/Chico? Well, take that back, Saturday?

Moi: Dude, I'd love to help you, but that is a little more of a marathon adventure than this body wants to endure at this writing. Am really having bothers with the upper back and neck causing tingly fingers and such. That last concussion a couple years back really changed my game. Very into staying very local for the time-being.

Have another decade-older friend who wants me to go to Bankok with him, and there's just no friggin' way I can endure flying in coach that kind of distance without going completely bat-crazy. World travel would be interesting, but it needs to be at a very languid pace anymore. My climb-every-mountain time is long over. This getting old is definitely getting old. No point to it, really. Keeping the helium tank close, that's for sure.

Bruce: Understandable.

One of my ideas for a fantasy trip would be to pay the five or six grand and just take a cruise around the world. Wouldn't exactly be feet on the ground in a big way, but at least you'd see the Vista go by.

Concussion you say? I didn't realize that you had had a concussion in the last few years. That's certainly something to take seriously. Also sorry to hear about the back. You know I have good days, and then days when my back is giving me grief. Sometimes it gets pretty old.

Thanks for giving my goofy idea I whirl. I've got this down to checking it out, then having them
come down to the chase bank in paradise, which is only 4 miles away. Hope that works.

Moi: A world cruise is definitely on the list of possibilities, though I'm pretty sure living at a Golden Corral 24 hours a day for any amount of time is not a good idea at this or any future writing. Did the Carnival Long Beach to Ensenada three-day-four-nighter sometime in the early Y2K years, and it was a food fest plus-plus. Very dangerous.

Good luck with the trailer and whatever adventures it conjures.

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Follow-up email a few days later titled: Mission Accomplished?

Moi: So, did you do the there and back?

Bruce: No, chickened out, explained I would try to get up next Saturday. Occurred to me I needed to find some mirror extensions to actually tow, wasn't able to find in Sacramento so will order online. If that one is gone another will come along.

Moi: Didn't even think about that aspect. Trailers are whole different beasts than motorhomes and vans. And maybe it will still be there, and maybe you can whittle down another thousand for all the bother.

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More follow-up a few weeks later:

Moi: What's the word on that trailer?

Bruce:

Hey Mike,

The word is that I went up to Magalia last weekend and bought the trailer. Now I have to say, David Hughes came with me, but really, you need to come along because the trip damn near killed Dave. I guess he's not ever seen one of my adventures or how the shape up. Dave is not even remotely mechanical minded so every glitch we encountered he became more and more flummoxed.

It's not that anything in particular was out of whack, just everything was out of whack. The seller, after I had requested he have the propane on to test the stove and oven, and the electricity on to test the refrigerator and finally the water hooked up to check for leaks, didn't have anything ready to go.

Then of course, there are the regular glitches in trying to do anything. The trailer has a weight distribution hitch, which again the seller didn't really know exactly how it work so we spent a lot of time reading instructions. In the end though the seller was a younger guy in great shape and was able to kind of with everything together it just took forever.

But all ended well, and the trailer towed very nicely back to Sacramento. I'm in the process of
getting it detailed and spiffed up to take a trip soon. We'll see how it works out.

Moi: Man, what an ordeal! Very happy that I wasn't there. Hope it works out and you get out on the road again.

Bruce: Come on Mike, that's not the spirit, you would've had a great time.

Actually, the seller was a pretty interesting guy. He lived on a sailboat up in Petaluma with a cabin there in Madelia next to his mother who is the actual owner. He just recently sold the sailboat and bought a motor yacht, again mored in Petaluma. He works as an engineer for Northrop Grumman in Chico. So he was pretty interesting.

Without his help, checking the thing out and hooking it up would've been impossible.

The trailer is in pretty good shape. It's just that it needs to be washed waxed and vacuumed from top to bottom. It wasn't used that much so the interior really almost looks new. Dave, of course, kept mumbling "I think you're crazy." Again, Dave has no mechanical aptitude whatsoever. I think he has the resources to just go from Motel to hotel but I'm sick of them.

Moi: Too long a day for me anymore. Hate even getting into my car to go across Turlock, much less a journey all the way to Motown. All I'm good for is hiking across the street to my club, or over a few blocks more to my Geerbucks. Whatever sense of adventure, whatever edge I had in my youth. is but a neuron trail of evaporating and ofttimes dubious perceptions.

At least you still wanted the trailer after you saw it live. Hope it works out for you.

* * * *

Back and forth with Patrick Newman on an article I sent:

Human race just 0.01% of all life but has eradicated most other living things https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study

Patrick: Wow. That's an effective illustration of the impact of Homo narcissus.

Moi: A big revelation in my mind, too. Going to be even tougher getting through a day knowing what a cancer cell I am, eating away at my mother and all my fellow earthlings.

Patrick: Yes, I too am disappointed. Yesterday I had such high hopes. I was thinking Elon Musk had this under control.

Moi: Nope, we are an out-of-control train, and the bridge ahead is crumbling into the torrent below. Elon Musk is just another fool who believes technology can forever save us from ourselves. God forgive us if we ever get off this planet.

Patrick: Dear god, I hope you know I was being facetious, and that Elon Musk is a sociopath! Along with Branson, et al.
Moi: I figured, but you never know who's been bit by the vampires ... Power, Fame, Fortune ... The Three Vanities I calls 'em anymore.

Patrick: Thumbs up emoji

* * * *

When Noble Lynxes Square Off, The Call Of The Wild Gets A Bit … Whiny

Battling over turf like all the male cats in my apartment complex. Especially bothersome when a female is in heat.

Lucky you for being that close to nature and life. Don’t complain.

Lots of ducks and geese and rat dogs, too. Whoo-hoo for urban wildlife.

* * * *

US warns staff in China: Beware of unusual sounds

Constant war without the gunpowder ... so far.

Titles from the Hopi language used in the Qatsi Trilogy:
Koyaanisqatsi: Unbalanced life.
Powaqqatsi: Parasitic way of life, life in transition.
Naqoyqatsi: Life as war, civilized violence, a life of killing each other.

Wikipedia: Qatsi Trilogy
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatsi_trilogy

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Response to an article from Ninos David:

Australian archbishop Philip Wilson guilty of concealing child sex abuses

Moi: The Catholic Church is an abomination. It's history is as filled with as much horror as the worst nightmare the human plague has ever concocted.

* * * *

Response to an article from Ninos David:

Why The Older You Get, The More You Hate Everyone (And Why That's OK)
https://www.elitedaily.com/life/i-hate-people/1420157

Moi: Don't know if hate is quite the right word, but I haven't come up with a better
one. Exasperation and bother and boredom and impatience and contempt come to mind, but aren't quite as catchy.

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Back and forth with Ninos David on an article I sent:

Human race just 0.01% of all life but has eradicated most other living things 
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study

Ninos: I guess you want to hear my two cents on this: No, human creatures are not worth saving.

Moi: It's tough getting through a day knowing you're a cancer cell eating away at your mother and all your brothers and sisters.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Human race just 0.01% of all life but has eradicated most other living things 
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study

Steve: Great article ... Thanks.

Moi: It's tough getting through a day knowing you're a cancer cell eating away at your mother, and all your brothers and sisters.

Steve: Ignorance is bliss.

Moi: It was, indeed, in the farm boy life of little old rural Hughson, and then came college and the world beyond.

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Response to an article from Ninos David:

Is cultural knowledge more important than language skills? 
http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20180518-is-cultural-knowledge-more-important-than-language-skills

Moi: English is the world's lingua franca, and probably will be for many years to come. As far as travel goes, I think a general respect for any given culture, along with a casual effort to learn key words and phrases, coupled with sign language, patience, and good humor, will get you by most anywhere where they don't want to kill you as soon as you get off the plane.

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Complaint to Amazon about a delivery:
Moi: Once again I was not happy to return home, and not find the package in the patio where I had asked it be left, both online and with a note on the door. What is the point of having an option that is not heeded? I live in an apartment complex, and do not feel comfortable having any package left unattended by the door for any length of time. The patio is a fenced-in area about which I feel much more secure. Yes, it takes some effort by the driver to come around the back side of my apartment, but I assume that's part of the customer service component in the job description. The photo is a great idea, though the package was in front of the neighbor’s apartment, and I only just happened to see it.

Amazon’s Response:

Hello,

I'm sorry to know about the issue you faced with the delivery of your order.

On priority, I've forwarded this issue to the shipping team in our company, I know they'll want to hear about your experience and rest assured this will be taken care of. We're aware that our choice of delivery services reflects on our business as a whole.

Additionally, I have also filled up a feedback form on your behalf and forwarded it to our business team who shall work upon it. I assure you that we will take necessary steps to make sure that you do not face such issue again.

Strong customer suggestion helps us continue to improve the selection and service we provide. We take any kind of information seriously as it is valuable to us in helping us to continue to improve our program.

We know you count on more than just great products, and that getting proper delivery service is just as important. I'm sorry for the experience you had, but hope you'll continue to shop with us.

Your patience is highly appreciated. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Best regards,
Shailendra

Moi: The response by your representative is much appreciated, but whether or not I'm truly satisfied will only be yes if I never have to address this issue again. Proof is always in the pudding.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

NASA wrestles with what to do with International Space Station after 2024

Steve: Trade it in for a Tesla … LOL
Moi: Is there really any need to put humans up in space anymore? Aren't satellites and robots and such, much more efficient and cost-effective?

There are some reasons … to perform development and experiments that can’t be done on Earth. They can develop pharmaceutical in zero gravity that you can’t do on Earth. Most of it though is to develop technology and perform experiments in preparation for longer space flights deeper into space … which I’ve come to the conclusion is not as high a priority as fixing our own planet.

I firmly believe in developing our capabilities in space technology … but more so as you say in Robotics and autonomous vehicles … primarily because it’s more reasonable … less expensive … safer … and I don’t believe we should be wasting money planning on populating Mars or beyond … we have a more urgent issue … we’re killing our current planet … and should be focusing on correcting that course before moving further out … just common sense to me.

Moi: It's crazy in my mind to waste treasury and resources to send anyone out into deep space. Too many issues with the garden we have already trashed beyond any hope of repair.

Steve: Agreed … and the thought that you can somehow turn a planet that was never intended to support human life … into a place you are going to populate … is absurd … we can’t even save our own planet … let alone another one … and if we could … it would be far easier to do so … than try to move somewhere else.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

He took his family to lunch, left the table and rammed them with his car, killing two, police say https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/05/21/he-took-his-family-to-lunch-left-the-table-and-rammed-them-with-his-car-killing-two-police-say/?utm_term=.81cb9881fe9b

He was a 'church-going family man' up until killing 2 family members at NC restaurant http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/crime/article211575219.html

Steve: Sounds like there’s a story behind this … only guessing … but I would imagine there was some kind of disagreement that was festering … and he snapped.

Moi: I betting on a tumor or dementia or Alzheimer's or some such thing.

Steve: How about just having a spurious epiphany … that he’s wasted his entire life following the Nuclear Family Myth … and realized that his wife and kids don’t give a shit about him … have used him his entire life … while he’s broken his back working himself to death to feed, cloth, shelter, and educate them … and one morning at breakfast … his wife and kids are demeaning him as they have for decades … demasculinizing him … and he snaps. I’m surprised it doesn’t happen more often.

Moi: Sure seems a very likely probability.
Steve: I read an article that says women are bummed that they can’t seem to find men who want to get married anymore. I’m baffled as to why they are perplexed. Our culture demeans and demoralizes men constantly … our roles models are buffoons like Homer Simpson … and the guy from Married with Children … the men are all portrayed as incompetent moron that are subjugated and castrated by their wives and kids constantly.

Why the fuck would anyone want to consciously commit to a lifetime of that fucking living hell?

Moi: Certainly not us, El Dude, certainly not us.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Celebrities Are Obsessed with the Keto Diet. Why You Shouldn't Be.

Steve: My take on this is that the Keto diet is the opposite extreme of the vegan diet … the are both extremes too far in either direction … one is no meat all veggies … the other is tons of fat … I’m aligned with the Paleo diet … it’s in the middle … low carb … low glycemic … unprocessed natural food only … healthy amount of good quality meat … tons of healthy veggies … Kale … Broccoli … Cabbage … Spinach … and nuts … low glycemic fruit … et cetera.

I’ve got an ex GF that is preaching Vegan to me … I keep telling her I eat more veggies than she does … but I also eat meat … all I can tell you is … I pay attention to how my body responds to food … and I never feel better than when I eat a good sized chunk of red meat … rare … I don’t care what they say … I feel good when I eat it … fuck anything else.

Moi: It's always curious why some people are drawn to such extremes.

Steve: I have a theory … our Judeo-Christine culture mythologizes and aggrandizes suffering … iconified by the image of Jesus being nailed to a cross and literally dying for us all … the ultimate “Extreme.” So we worship the concept that pain and suffering are the ultimate avenue to enlightenment … and this gets codified into every aspect of our culture … the Work Ethic is a perfect example … and greedy Capitalist instill this into our Political system … that being that if you work hard … i.e., Suffer … you will be rewarded in the long run … which is bullshit … you simply get into deeper and deeper debt … and make someone else rich … who doesn’t work for their money.

So extreme diets that iconify suffering to achieve health and beauty … are natural for our culture … it’s the “No Pain, No Gain” concept … which has been debunked by exercise experts … all that will lead to is a strained body that falls apart in the long run … I know … I followed that Mantra most of my life … and my body got fucked up as a result … strained ligaments … frozen shoulder … arthritis … et cetera.

Moi: Christianity and Manifest Destiny on steroids.
Manifest Destiny
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest_destiny

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Two-thirds of world population will live in cities by 2050: UN report

Steve: Correction … we’ll all be scrambling to survive on the vestiges of civilization … after
the <war-famine-pestilence-climate impacts> … take your pick … survivalist will be in what’s
left of the country and woods … everyone else will be clinging to dead cities … void of any
remaining cans of beans or water …

Moi: Urban warfare, unending pain and suffering, my favorite.

Steve: All those women that spend all that money for plastic surgery and boobs and lift jobs to
look hot are going to regret it … the best thing to be during the coming times will be a homely
looking woman that nobody has any interest in.

Moi: I suspect everyone will play it with whatever they've got. Booty or stew meat, the strong
will decide.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Mental noise is bad: Why silence is the think tank of the soul
https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/mental-noise-is-hurting-us-why-silence-is-the-think-
tank-of-the-soul

Moi: Good article. A challenging thing to do in our busy-busy embrace-it-all culture.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

California assisted death law overturned in court

Steve: That’s OK … I don’t need any assistance.

Moi: Or permission.

Steve: I just really don't get what it is that makes people so passionate and spend so much
energy and time trying to stop other people from killing themselves … it seems as if they're more
just stressed about these other people's lives than the people are themselves.

Moi: I'm of a mind to tell everyone to keep their nose on their own face anymore.
Steve: The biggest myth in the world is that life is special and precious ... the truth of the matter is that life is cheap ... look across the planet ... millions of people are slaughtered and starving to death And over history have been dumped into pits by the thousands and hundreds of thousands without a second thought ... there's plenty more where they came from ... in fact there's too many ... we can lose about 4 billion people on this planet and we'd still be overpopulated.

Moi: There were only two hundred million people just two thousand years ago, and it was still more than a little fucked up.

Steve: Yeah and life was so cheap back then they used to strap them to crucifixes and use them as tiki torches at Roman parties

Moi: Yeesch, what a horrible species we can be.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The 10 professions with the most psychopaths

Steve: Nice to know at keast I'm low on the list ... LOL

Moi: I've played in a few of those lines of work. And the way I see it is we all have bits and pieces of the countless labels the psychiatry folks love to toss around. Traits that served well the survival of our ancestors, but potentially dysfunctional when taken to extreme. One of my lines is that I'm a natural born killer who chooses not to.

Amazon: The Wisdom of Psychopaths

Steve: I agree with the Labels issue … the field of psychiatry looks at the world through the lens of their world … I believe there is a difference between someone who “feels” … and has compassion and empathy … but an ability to manage it and keep it in check when required to get the job done … and someone who lacks the ability to have compassion or empathy even if they wanted to.

If you’re in the middle of a war zone … and you break down crying because you just saw something horrible … you will be the next statistic … it’s unfortunate … but that is the world we live in. In my mind feeling too much is a liability … it’s never done me any good … and developing an ability to detach yourself from the cruelty of the world is a survival mechanism. But you are labelled a sociopath or psychopath for doing so.

When the hordes come rushing over the horizon … they are going to mow down the touchy feely types who are doing most of the complaining right now.

Moi: One of my ditties that the PC-ers don't much care for: Ethics is the luxury of a full belly and a safe harbor.

Conversations

Michael J. Holshouser
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Washington Appears to Be Gearing Up for a Third Gulf War

Moi: Can't we all just get along?

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Margot Kidder, 'Superman' Actress, Dead at 69

Steve: Another One Bites the Dust prior to even reaching 70 which all the Wall Street pundits are trying to tell you to work until

Moi: And whose dick does Wall Street suck off every day? Time and health are the only wealth, I say, I say.

Facebook Messenger Conversations with Debbie Mason-Peterson about Esther Squire's suicide in September 2014, sent to Kathy Vierra-Marchant in July 2016, and to Marci Wentzell in December 2016. All are alumni from the Hughson Union High School Class of ‘72:

Hughson Union High School Class of '72
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hughson-Union-High-School-Class-of-72/301790023189950?ref=hl

Final Exit and Related Links
http://finalexitandrelatedlinks.blogspot.com/

Hey, Marcia,

Here's the cut and paste of the Facebook conversations with Debbie that began when Esther took her life. It starts when Debbie first hears about it, and concludes soon after the memorial in October.

September 19, 2014
9/19, 5:17pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Have you heard about Esther???
9/19, 5:19pm
Michael Holshouser

No, what's going on?

9/19, 5:20pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Her friend, Betty, called me. The Sheriff called Betty, and Esther has passed.

I can't stop crying, Mike, I'm shaking all over.

I can't believe this.

9/19, 5:21pm
Michael Holshouser

What happened?

9/19, 5:22pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

They wouldn't tell Betty the details because she isn't family.

I talk to Esther everyday, and I know she has a lot of problems going on, but none of seemed this bad!

9/19, 5:24pm
Michael Holshouser

She's definitely been down in the dumps.

9/19, 5:24pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I'm trying to get ahold of her sister and kids, but I don't have their numbers.

9/19, 5:25pm
Michael Holshouser

All I can suggest is the Marble Quarry website.

9/19, 5:26pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yes, and so have I, so we have been there for each other. I can't believe she thought it was all so bad that she had to do this.
Her and I have been there for each other. Sorry, I'm so nervous, I can't type.

9/19, 5:28pm
Michael Holshouser

I guess she was just so tired of struggling with family and work. Just didn't want to start over.

I'm actually about to head over to the coast with a friend for a few days, so I need to shut things down and move on. I'm really sorry Esther is no longer with us. She will be missed. Keep me posted as you find out more details.

9/19, 5:38pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Okay, Michael, I'll keep you informed.

September 20, 2014
9/20, 8:19am
Michael Holshouser

Wish we could have done more for her.

September 20, 2014
9/20, 2:29pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Michael, she killed herself with helium. She told me you told her about it.

9/20, 3:49pm
Michael Holshouser

We'd talked about that sort of thing, but I didn't realize that she was that depressed about things to actually do it.

9/20, 3:50pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I didn't, either, Michael! I'm devastated and shocked beyond words.

9/20, 3:52pm
Michael Holshouser

She will be missed, that's for sure.

Are you in touch with her family?

9/20, 3:55pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson
Yes I've been in touch with her sister, Julie, only.

9/20, 3:55pm
Michael Holshouser

What's she saying?

9/20, 3:56pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

They're all very devastated. The kids went to the jail to tell Colby today.

9/20, 4:00pm
Michael Holshouser

What a thing to go through.

Wonder how Brent is feeling?

9/20, 4:04pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I've talked to him, and he's not doing real good, either. He said he cried all night.

9/20, 4:05pm
Michael Holshouser

I imagine they will all be wishing they'd paid more attention.

9/20, 4:06pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Her kids should have reached out more but they were stubborn.

9/20, 4:08pm
Michael Holshouser

It's sad that they were all so unsupportive. I think she just felt so alone.

She'd given so much to all of them, and when she needed help, nothing. Or at least that how she seemed to perceive it.

9/20, 4:12pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

She did, Michael!
9/20, 4:16pm
Michael Holshouser

And to have to start all over, I think she just ran out of steam.

9/20, 4:20pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I just talked to Mark Hollingsworth and told him.

She kept telling me she felt trapped and doomed.

9/20, 4:23pm
Michael Holshouser

Very sad.

9/20, 5:50pm
Michael Holshouser

It's a telling thing that none of her family have her Facebook page friended.

9/20, 5:51pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Esther removed them all herself.

Probably about a week and a half ago.

She told me that she was done with them.

9/20, 5:59pm
Michael Holshouser

What an amazing thing that all her struggling for her children came to such a bitter end. So sad.

9/20, 6:00pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I know it, Michael, and it shouldn't have!

I still can't believe this is true. I can just see her and I together having lunch or dinner. I had so much planned for us to do in the future. I'm so terribly sick inside.

Her kids should have nurtured and cared for their mother I'm pretty upset with them.

9/20, 6:06pm
Michael Holshouser
Hard to fathom how they failed her. Can't imagine ever doing such a thing to my mother, that's for sure.

9/20, 6:07pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Me, neither!

September 21, 2014
9/21, 9:31pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Hi, Mike, do you have Marcia Wentzell's phone number?

9/21, 9:44pm
Michael Holshouser

Don't know if they're still current, but here's what I have.

Phones: (509) 675-2856 and (209) 529-9673

Email: Marcia Wentzell <mark.eye@hotmail.com>

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/marcia.wentzell?fref=ts

So, what's the latest? Sounds like there's going to be a memorial sometime soon. Any details?

9/21, 9:45pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I don't know any details yet. Waiting to hear from Julie.

Thank you, Mike. I'll try calling her tomorrow. Thank you.

The area code 509 might be current!

The family is waiting for the autopsy to be completed, and then they can make plans. That's what I heard last.

September 22, 2014
9/22, 8:02am
Michael Holshouser

They seem to be using her Facebook page to make announcements, so I'll be watching that. Keep me posted if you hear anything else. Thanks.
9/22, 1:06pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I will, Mike..

September 25, 2014
9/25, 8:38pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Michael, did you see Esther at all last Thursday? Was she at Starbucks in Turlock?

9/25, 9:26pm
Michael Holshouser

We talked a couple times on the phone in the days before. I offered to pay the money she owed to get it off her credit report, so that she could apply for a government job some friend had told her about. She at first said yes, but then later sent a thanks-but-no-thanks email. I was headed off for a trip to the coast and emailed back for her to think on it, that we could talk about it more over coffee when I got back the following week.

Please keep this between you and me if you can manage it. Let's let her rest in peace, and not create a larger drama for the family and all concerned. I'm only telling you this because I know she talked to you a great deal about all the things that happened for her to reach this fateful decision You were a great friend to her, and I'm sure she appreciated all you tried to do to help. But in the end, she felt so alone, so abandoned by her family, and just didn't have the steam to start over.

Anywho, that's how it came down from my point of view. So incredibly sad. Makes for a heavy heart that we didn't/couldn't do more.

And as I said, please keep this between you and me.

Take care,

M

9/25, 9:30pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

She told me about borrowing money from you, and she said you were going to let her know if you could lend it to her. She said you called back and said you couldn't lend the money at this time, but she was fine with it.

9/25, 9:33pm
Michael Holshouser

Nope, I was all set to head over to get a cashier's check at Tri Counties Bank. All I needed to know from her was who to make it out to.
9/25, 9:34pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yes, I agree with you that we should move on and try to remember our sweet lovely friend, Esther, and cherish our time we had with her. I won't say anything about what we talked about because it has no benefit to anyone. There are some things her family doesn't need to know.

9/25, 9:34pm
Michael Holshouser

They'll be dealing with this for the rest of their lives.

9/25, 9:36pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I don't know why she didn't tell me the truth, but I guess she thought about it and decided not to borrow. I don't know what was really in her head, and I thought I did.

9/25, 9:38pm
Michael Holshouser

I imagine she was probably going back and forth and forth on what to do. Not an easy thing to let go. I'm sure we can forgive the little fibs along the way ... :)

9/25, 9:41pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I will keep our conversation private, Michael, I promise. The only reason I asked if you saw Esther last Thursday is because she texted me and said she was driving around Turlock, so I thought of you and thought maybe you had coffee with her or talked to her.

9/25, 9:43pm
Michael Holshouser

Nope, no coffee time, alas.

9/25, 9:46pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I am so sad she decided to do this, Michael. I am still very much in shock.

9/25, 9:48pm
Michael Holshouser

I don't imagine we'll ever quite understand all the things that were going through her mind.

Time to hit the sack at this end, so g'night.
And thanks for keeping mum on things.

9/25, 9:49pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Good night, Michael, and mums the word!!!

September 26, 2014
9/26, 2:59am
Michael Holshouser

Woke up for a bit, and while waiting for the sleeping pill to kick in, it occurred to me that the reason Esther didn't tell you about my offer of financial aid was because I had asked not to tell anyone. Prefer to keep my boy scout attempts anonymous, so her white lie to you was merely her keeping her promise to me.

9/26, 3:25am
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Hey, me too. Thanks for explaining it to me. I don't care that she lied and that's okay. I just didn't want her to leave like this I had plans for us to do things and maybe go places! She has really broken my heart.

September 26, 2014
9/26, 7:31am
Michael Holshouser

She will be missed.

October 11, 2014
10/11, 3:56pm
Michael Holshouser

Hey, Deb, just thought I'd check in and see how you're doing. It was a good turnout yesterday, a real cross-section of all the lives Esther touched. Wish she could have seen it before letting go.

10/11, 3:58pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I'm okay, Michael, thank you! I know this has hit me hard, and I just know it will take some time to get past it. I can't imagine life without her. We were very close.

10/11, 4:01pm
Michael Holshouser

You two were definitely close. She's left a big hole for a lot of us, that's for sure. I imagine her family is really feeling it, big-time. A lot of regrets and second-guessing going on across the
board, no doubt.

10/11, 4:04pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yea, I'm sure there is a lot of second-guessing going on, and there should be because I knew all of Esther's hurts, emotions, and all her situations.

10/11, 4:09pm
Michael Holshouser

I knew quite a bit, too, and I'm sure you knew even more. Wonder how the family dynamic will play out in the times to come. Except maybe for David in the once and awhile, I doubt I'll ever have much contact with Ralph or any of the kids. Esther was really the main connection.

10/11, 4:12pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I was leaning on Esther she was a rock for me. She helped me a lot. I didn't know she would even consider doing this!

10/11, 4:16pm
Michael Holshouser

I would have thought she would at least stick around for her grandkids, but I guess she just was tired of struggling to keep her head above water, and didn't want to start over. She had spent her life giving and giving to everyone else, and was running on empty, exhausted.

It's always important to take time to replenish yourself.

10/11, 4:18pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I know I can't imagine her life being so bad that she had to make it final.

10/11, 4:20pm
Michael Holshouser

I'm wondering at this point how much of it was chemical. Was she taking any medication? Someone mentioned something about Prozac, but I never heard her mention it. Wonder if something might have helped.

10/11, 4:21pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

She wasn't taking Prozac. I was trying to get her to go to the doctor and get Prozac or something but she wouldn't.
10/11, 4:23pm
Michael Holshouser

I didn't really think about suggesting it, but I think she was so against drugs that I doubt she would have listened to me, either.

10/11, 4:24pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

I'm recently on Prozac and she knew it. She told me that she would wait and see how I do on it. I've taken before and it helps.

I so badly wanted to help her, and I tried very hard but she had her mind closed to getting past her problems.

10/11, 4:27pm
Michael Holshouser

It's just challenging to get the right medication and the right dosage. It's a process figuring it all out, and I guess she just didn't have the money or patience to consider giving it a shot. Like I said, she just ran out of steam for living.

We both did our best for her – certainly more than her family as far as we know – and have nothing to feel guilty about as far as I'm concerned.

10/11, 4:30pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

She was on Medi-Cal so it wouldn't cost her anything. I told her I would go with her. She just said she hated Medi-Cal.

10/11, 4:32pm
Michael Holshouser

I didn't know that. Too bad she didn't give it a shot.

10/11, 4:32pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

She should have!!!

She was stubborn.

I have a family situation today. My sister is threatening suicide.

She is really messed up. I used to talk to Esther about her.
Michael Holshouser

Esther was probably as stubborn as anybody I've ever known ... :)

Is there anything you can do to help your family member?

10/11, 4:39pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Since our family lost Eddie and my dad, she has alienated herself from the family. She's been horribly mean to my mom. She thinks everyone is against her. She is a huge into drama and starting family drama. She's smoked pot all her life and still does, she's on meth, she's addicted to Vicodin and she drinks alcohol. She a mess and she chooses to stay away from her family: my mom, brother and me. She blames us for her actions. I texted her husband and told him, and she texted me back and told me to leave him alone.

10/11, 4:45pm
Michael Holshouser

Sounds pretty darned rough. A life of pot-smoking and meth pretty much wrecks the mind beyond help in my experience. Doesn't sound like there's much you can do except try to protect your mother as much as possible. They say blood is thicker than water, but I say it ain't that much thicker. Esther's clan has proven that, that's for sure.

10/11, 4:49pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yea, Mike, my sister is a real piece of work. I texted her husband and asked him if someone should call 911. Well, he didn't respond to me, and my sister text me a few minutes later and said to leave him alone. I told her I take suicide accusations serious. So they can deal with it. Dammit!

10/11, 4:54pm
Michael Holshouser

Not much you can do if she won't accept help in my thinking. You could maybe get her 5150-ed at the county psych unit, but that's probably only going to make her more angry than she already is. Pretty rough dealing with irrational behavior. I'm to the point where I just 86 anybody who abuses me. Time is short and getting shorter every second in this life, and I've got no need for anyone who can't behave in a civil manner.

10/11, 4:58pm
Michael Holshouser

Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
http://www.stancounty.com/bhrs/

10/11, 5:05pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yea she's beyond help those are my feelings. If she has to commit suicide I can't stop her. Now she's really mad because I was concerned. I told her to deal with her suicidal thoughts with her husband I give up!

10/11, 5:09pm
Michael Holshouser

Sounds right to me. I certainly wouldn't have much patience for it if it was my sister.

One thing I was wondering about yesterday, is if Colby was released from prison to come to the memorial?

10/11, 5:12pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Colby wasn't there yesterday.

10/11, 5:14pm
Michael Holshouser

Didn't really know more than a couple of the kids, mainly through Facebook pics, so I wasn't sure.

10/11, 5:16pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Yea, I noticed yesterday that Garrett was crying so hard, but the girls didn't show any emotion.

I know we all grieve differently. I cried all the way through the service. I just felt so empty.

10/11, 5:22pm
Michael Holshouser

I wonder if the girls were just looking to blame someone besides themselves.

10/11, 5:23pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

They always appeared like they blamed their mom. It made me furious.

10/11, 5:28pm
Michael Holshouser

Well, as you said she de-friended them all a week or two before, so I guess she made it clear what she thought of them by the end. Sad, considering how many times she used to say how "family was everything." Did she de-friend them all, or just a few of them?
All of them.

Wow, boggling.

Like I said in an earlier conversation, I can't imagine deserting my mom.

Me neither, Mike!

Well, time for me to head out to dinner with a friend. Good chatting with you. Go easy on yourself. Like I said, we're not the ones who have to carry any guilt over Esther's decision. We did what we could.

Keep in mind these two Marcel Proust quotes I posted on the Class of ’72 page:

Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.

People do not die for us immediately, but remain bathed in a sort of aura of life which bears no relation to true immortality but through which they continue to occupy our thoughts in the same way as when they were alive. It is as though they were traveling abroad.

Ciao, ciao, for now.

M

Thank you, Michael. I appreciate your kindness! Talk to you soon.

Take care.
10/11, 9:17pm
Debbie Mason-Peterson

You, too!

October 12, 2014
10/12, 8:38am
Michael Holshouser

Thought of two other questions this morning.

Was Brent at the memorial?

And was Esther really a Christian? It was nothing she ever talked about with me, so I'm wondering if she was, or if it was the kids putting on a show to make themselves feel better.

10/12, 9:05am
Debbie Mason-Peterson

Brent was at the funeral. He came and sat with my mom and I.

We talked about it once recently. She wasn't sure how she believed. She wasn't sure if there really was a God or heaven. She didn't attend church.

10/12, 9:09am
Michael Holshouser

That matches much better with my view of her thinking on such things.

Only met Brent once, way back when I ran into Esther at the La Grange Rodeo, I think before they were married. Barely remember what he looks like. Another of Esther's many struggles.

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And this was Kathy Vierra-Marchant's response after I sent the text above to her back in July:

It was good talking to you, too. That chat was long overdue on my part because I think I told you that after Esther's death I wanted to have a chat. At that time, it was mainly going to consist of q's Debbie had. And that looks like that was covered anyway with the texts you just sent me. She was the last one to talk to Esther!! I remember now, she told me that Esther was driving around Turlock and Debbie was trying to get her to come over to her place, or she would even come to Turlock. She was very adamant with me at the time that you may have assisted Esther. And I said, well, if you think so why don't you ask him yourself!! You see the thing with Debbie, she just keeps issues going on and on and on. I told her sooo many times, to move on and let shit go. Your responses to her in all those texts, were spot on. I could not have responded any better. You are great with words. You know, the funny thing is, Esther told me was that Debbie drove her nuts too with all the Robin/Debbie drama. She told me that a few weeks before she died. I would never tell Debbie that because I think they had a good friendship. It was just something
we shared and had in common and found out we weren't being insensitive to Debbie, but Jesus H Christ, we were both so done talking about it. Hey I have to get. Haven't accomplished much today. Clock’s ticking!

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Mother's Day: Why the Woman Who Invented It Said She Regretted It
https://www.inverse.com/article/44805-mothers-day-anna-jarvis-regret

Steve: Why am I not surprised?

Moi: Heard about this before, but had forgotten. Hallmark Holidaze, I calls 'em. Amazing all the ways the one-percenters access our minds and wallets. What suckers we are for so many absurdities. I did wedding photography for a bit, and that could very quickly get more than a little over the top.

According to this movie, Charles Dickens was the one who kicked off the way we do Christmas. Watched it with Mom last night. Kind of a Shakespeare in Love take.

Wikipedia: The Man Who Invented Christmas
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_Who_Invented_Christmas_(film)

Netflix: The Man Who Invented Christmas

Wikipedia: A Christmas Carol
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Christmas_Carol

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Noam Chomsky reveals exactly what went wrong in the 2016 presidential election that gave us Trump

Moi: Sent a Doonesbury cartoon with Doonesbury lamenting, “I miss my capacity for outrage.”

Steve: I still have it ... and wish I could turn it off ... cuz in these times ... it's on 24x7x365

Moi: Hard to watch the world go the direction it has. We all hoped for so much more.

Steve: I'm so overworked I live second to second continuously ... hope takes awareness of the future ... which I don't have time or energy to ponder.

Moi: Very Zen, without the Zen.
Steve: Yeah ... but Zen for the wrong reasons ... Zen like in Fight or Flight mode ... non stop ...

Moi: A level of intensity that was fun when you were young, but only exhausting and filled with ever-present dread at this writing.

Steve: When I was younger I worked fewer hours ... and this area wasn't so crowded ... and I didn't have a house to take care of ... owning a home fucks your weekends.

Moi: Hard to keep, hard to let go, how our minds do get bound up in our commitments to the this and that.

Steve: It’s a conscious long term strategy … one that serendipitously paid off in the current time frame. Shortly after I bought this house the rents started to skyrocket … to levels I never imagine. To buy this house costs no more than renting a one bedroom apartment does … and when you factor in the appreciation … I’m actually making money on it … so overall I’m very glad I bought this place when I did … or I’d be fucked right now … paying more for renting … and getting nothing out of it.

Moi: You've definitely gamed the game well. The trick is someday enjoying the fruits of all the labor.

Steve: That's the problem ... mist likely die b4 that happens.

Moi: Not too late to cash in your chips and go be a hippie vagabond over in Hawaii.

Steve: Hawaii is the most expensive place to live in the US ... Washington looks good but for the weather ... Eugene is still #1 on my list ...

Moi: I'm just talking about enjoying your life as much as possible with whatever health and energy you have left.

Steve: Thanks for the good thoughts ... I think it's too late .. you have done the right thing ... I'll be working till I'm 65 then died of a heart attack or a stroke 6 months later.

Moi: I'm in your corner rooting for ya, Cuz.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Pals over partners: the rise of the 'Friend Parent'
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/family/pals-partners-rise-friend-parent/

Steve: Pathetic ... jeses ... think about how the kid will feel.

Moi: I don't know, might be a lot more positive than some of the harsh relationships and divorces that I've witnessed. Add to that all the kids who've been messed up big time by foster care and worse. I've had plenty of women friends – good spirits who I had no sexual or relationship interest in, but who would have been very good mothers – who would have been far
better off having my seed come out of their wombs than the pathetic genetic choices they made. Better to be raised by two sane friends separately than two insane haters together using the kids to get at each other.

Steve: Except that if she gets pissed at you for any reason she can mail you for child support for the next 20 years

Moi: While in college, and somewhere in my thirties, a couple women asked about providing them with a seed, and I, not realizing how wise I was at the time, passed.

What happens with sperm banks? Are those guys ever forced to pay up?

Steve: There's been litigation regarding that ... people who want to breed are ignorant selfish abusive narcissists.

Life is a death sentence, with every sort of torture imaginable inflicted as the given dream allows. What a cruel, selfish thing to bring a child into this world.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Liberals, You’re Not as Smart as You Think

Moi: I've been telling all the liberals I know that he's going to be re-elected. My bet is the deplorables are going to come out in droves for the midterms, and unless Mueller find a red-hot smoking gun, the dems can forget about impeachment, much less any criminal charges.

Steve: Liberals don't even get that Trump fucking Centerfolds and Porn Sluts ... just makes him a stud in a Right Wing country boys mind ... more votes for the Alpha Male!

Moi: Crazy but true.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The real reason tech billionaires are prepping for doomsday
https://www.salon.com/2018/05/12/the-real-reason-tech-billionaires-are-prepping-for-doomsday/

Moi: The shards of collapse are always fashioned into something new. It's our nature. The trick is to survive, to abide, whatever new order arises. A good portion of those geeks will be useless if their technologies are no longer practical.

Steve: Their tech will collapse ... their paper and digital currency will be shit ... and they will just be pencil neck nobody's again ... getting bullied by the coal miners they put out of work ... who all the women will be flocking to for the protection of their arsenals ... from getting gang-raped by roving packs of 16-year-olds ... raised on gang-rape video games their entire lives.
Moi: Exactly so.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Living Apart Together: A New Option for Older Adults

Steve: Booty call FWB in old age!

Moi: Too much bother for me, but a good option for them who can endure the visual and texture and rat dog and other domesticating aspects.

Steve: I know the number of couples who have adopted this pattern and I find it funny because essentially they're getting booty call permanently and the woman thinks that she's being independent these guys are never going to marry these women and they get all the benefits of it without the cost or painted living with him

Moi: Other than a few roommate situations with women, I've never lived with a girlfriend.

Steve: I've done so two times ... mistake both times.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Net neutrality dies on June 11th

Moi: All right by me. Am weary of the internet and all this technology anyway. The head's full enough for this lifetime. So ... more chat time, more walks, more books, more movies, more time at the gym, more nothing time, more old school everything in the real virtual reality.

Steve: What this means is it allows Corporations to fuck in the ass … deeper and wider … than they already are … no foreplay … no lube.

Moi: Nothing new, and I'm past caring anyway.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Army goggles help see through smoke and fog; shoot around corners

Moi: Gonna take awhile for them toys to work their way down to our level.
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

How does alcohol affect your sleep?  
https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321731.php

Moi: It's a wonder that I'm still alive and functioning at all is all I can say.

* * * *

A month-long series of emails about my discovery and exploration of GABA. They began during the Sunday wee hours after returning home from an early May 2018 day in Morgan Hill with cousin Steve:

Hey, hey,

Home safe and sound, unloaded, up from a couple hours of napping, waiting for the melatonin to kick in. Thanks for a good day. That Indian restaurant is really something.

Working on getting Signal downloaded. Don't usually do much with my phone online, so it may take some fiddling. The other two I've subscribed to, and never used, are ProtonMail and Confide.

Was thinking about the door jam in your garage, and it occurred to me you might also be able to slip a long, thin piece of metal like a ruler under the door to kick it out. Would be much simpler than the pulley and rope idea if there's any kind of gap.

Congrats on your academy award if you get it, and good luck with everything else, too.

Ciao, ciao,

M

Steve: Yeah ... enjoyed visiting with you too. Forgot to give you some of this GABA stuff I got as a sleeping aid ... works better than Melatonin ... next time around.

I was exhausted yesterday due to poor sleep and crashed not long after you left. Glad you made it back fine.

Let me know if you need any help setting up that Signal app.

Take care,

S

Moi: Haven't heard of GABA. Looks like I can get it on Amazon. Any particular brand you favor?

-----
Steve: I bought such a huge amount of this stuff because of a good price break on it and I have enough to supply half of California for the rest of my life ... honestly if you want some of this stuff I have way too much ... and if we figure out a way to connect sometime again soon I can give you a ton of it.

How much is too much ... I bought 5 kilos of it so I had 11 pounds!

Bulk Supplements
https://www.bulksupplements.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=Gaba

Wikipedia: Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamma-Aminobutyric_acid

Moi: Yowza, must really work for you. I’m thinking I should experiment with it first. Amazon has the 100-gram powder version for about 12 bucks. Do you take it every day?

Steve: No … my general summary of it is that it works better than either Melatonin … or Benadryl … and has less side effects … but does have some. I found that when I took it for more than 3 or 4 days it made me feel sluggish … it’s possible I was just taking too much. In general it helps me sleep and relax … but I think it slows your metabolism … which due to the fact that I am not retired … I need to keep revved ... LOL

Overall I use it over anything else.

The reason I bought the quantity I did is simply because of the price break … it cost about half as much at that quantity as it does when you guy a single kilo … partially due to the cost reduction … and partially due to the elimination of shipping fees.

Moi: That much certainly should last awhile.

I'd been using a half a Kirkland Sleep Aid every once and awhile until my doctor recommended I switch to melatonin. Seems to work, but I'm of a mind to have a war chest with different tools.

Amazon: Kirkland Signature Nighttime Sleep Aid (Doxylamine Succinate)
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000UIEIBY/ref=oh_aui_search_detailpage?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Wikipedia: Doxylamine

I generally have no trouble falling asleep, but usually wake up an hour or two later, which is when I take the melatoin or doxylamine, that get me back down an hour or three later for (hopefully) another three to four hours. The joy of retirement is that I can take a nap (or two or three) pretty much any time I feel like it.

Steve: My driver for getting off of antihistamines was that I read they can contribute to getting dementia … which I never knew … until AFTER taking them for about 5 years straight.
Moi: Got a 100-gram package of GABA from Amazon, and used it the first time last night. Did the recommended quarter teaspoon. Seemed to work well, and no noticeable hangover at this writing. Curious how much you take, and how often.

Steve: I started with ¼ teaspoon and went to ½ … but when I do so I can’t do that for more than a night or two … starts making me feel sluggish … and I think it slows your metabolism to the point where you can gain weight. Generally I’d say don’t use more than you have to … to get to sleep … and not every night … only when it’s hard to get to sleep.

Moi: That's the way I do these things, too. Like to mix them up, as well, so that the body doesn't get too laissez-faire about any one.

So thanks for the new tool in the nighttime war chest.

Steve: BTW … as I said … I’ve got way too much of this stuff … I can flip you a Kilo … which is ten times what you bought … LOL

Moi: By the way, I'm really responding well to the GABA. Almost like my body has a craving for it. Holding intake to a moderate level – one to three quarter teaspoons a day – but the results feel good. Thanks for sharing.

Steve: Good to hear ... it had a mellow calming effect.

Moi: Yes, a very pleasant mellow.

Too many variables to be sure, but I think it may be helping the brain function a little more crisply, as well.

Steve: Only down side is I found it slowed me down too much when I took like a half teaspoon 3 or 4 days in a row.

Moi: No problem slowing down at this end … I've got no deeds to do, no promises to keep.

59th Street Bridge Song
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-8RljXFSzI

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

California surpasses UK to become world's 5th largest economy
https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2018/05/04/california-surpasses-uk-to-become-worlds-5th-largest-economy

Steve: More people slaving away living miserable overworked lives with no time for rest or enjoyment … to make someone else rich
Moi: The pharaohs of old would applaud.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

The Coming Collapse

Moi: An excellent article. I be as ready as anyone I know, and I'm still not ready. Hoping it doesn't happen until after I'm gone, but I ain't counting on it.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent, including a sidebar conversation between he and another friend, Michael Gennaro, who sees the world in a much less skeptical light than Steve and I:

Cash outflow? Major Social Security change projected to begin in 2022

Steve: There is no way to tell when they will actually cut benefits ... but they can't wait until the reserves run out ... they will need to do so ahead of time to soften the impact. My guess us sometime in the next ten years ... after 2022 or later ... because that when it will become an undeniable issue.

This is why people who are cheering on the corporate tax cuts ... or ... those giddy about the stock market going up ... are selling out the future of their kids and old people ... because all of those gains in the stock market that they are so happy about now are essentially coming from a borrowed future and a bankrupt government.

This is the hypocrisy that I see with many liberals today in that they talk about hating Trump and hating the Republicans but they are all jumping for joy because their 401K plans in the stock market has been going up recently ... but that money is all borrowed time on the future it's ... coming from an ever-increasing deficit that will bankrupt the country and there will be no social security or Medicare for anybody.

You can't responsibly say that you don't like the Republicans are Trump and then be happy because the stock market is going up ... the stock market is going up because they cut corporate taxes which is bankrupting the revenue stream and in addition it's coming from deregulation which is going to pollute and kill the planet ... so all of the gains in the stock market ultimately are rooted in the fact that we are ruining the life source of our planet and bankrupting our Revenue stream for social programs.

Moi: Fortunately, I won't need it too much longer. My goal is to spend every last dime in the piggy bank, and then back to oblivion.
Steve: FYI … another discussion … in which I’m trying to point out the disparity between what I see Liberals saying about hating Trump and the Republican Agenda … while at the same time being down right giddy about benefiting financially from it.

Let me know what you think of my perspective on this … I think I did a pretty good job of ferreting out the detail.

Mike,

Here are my thoughts on this, Mike … and to underscore this … I believe it is what is wrong with our Country in a foundational way:

1. FACT: The stock market is going gang busters because:

   a. Corporate taxes are being cut
   b. Deregulation

   This all comes at the expense of social program, badly needed infrastructure deferred maintenance, and the environment. Our country is crumbling … social security will go bankrupt … or at least be severely cut back … Medicare will do the same … and the planet will die … and on and on. In addition, this contributes even more to disparity of wealth … that is already obscene. This is not Chicken Little thinking … these are facts.

2. Given this … what I see on the Left is people who bash Trump and the Right agenda … and acknowledgement of the above Facts … but they are literally giddy about their retirement funds going up … which is a direct result of the above. The reason being that you can achieve short term financial gains by selling out the social program … workers health … and environment … both short and long term. The “Cost” … is the future of your children and old people … who will be living in abject poverty and have no future.

3. In order to reconcile those two … I only see two options:

   a. Ignorance – They simply don’t see the relationship between the two … the stock market going up and the true cost of what is driving that.

   b. Hypocrisy – They do see the relationship … know that it is has these impacts and costs to the welfare of the population and planet … but when they see how much money they’re making … they essentially sell out their morals and values … and run with the pack … and jump for joy because they have theirs.

I can forgive the Ignorant … I have a challenge doing so for the Hypocrites … because they know their gains come at a catastrophic cost to humanity … which it will … but peoples values tend to bend when they personally benefit … even if it’s at the expense of others … including their own children and grand children.

To circle back around … our economic system has become to abstracted and obfuscated that the average person in this country is contributing to the pain, suffering, and demise of the rest of humanity … and they are either completely unaware that they are contributing to it … or they
throw their hands up and say … Well I can’t do anything about it … so I might as well enjoy the
benefits of trashing the planet and making the obscenely wealthy more so … as long as I get a
little piece of the pie.

What should people do? Well they could at least put their money where their mouths are … and
perhaps divest themselves of that machine that is killing the planet … there are mutual funds
designed to do just that … essentially more ethically invested funds. You used to be able to put
your money in a savings account or bonds that earned at least 6 or 7% … but those days are gone
… and I think it’s intentionally designed that way … to force people to invest in the market …. Where
their retirement funds can be “Harvested” every 10 years or so … which I think will
happen again in the next recession … which is going to make the last two look like a walk in the
park.

Yeah … it’s problematic … you’re so engrained in the system … that it’s difficult to extract
yourself … from a system that is killing the entire planet … and subjecting a significant number
of people and countries to what amounts to a thinly veiled colonialism … that tortures and kills
people … to make their economies open to western corporations to use and abuse their resources
and population.

Short of moving to another country there’s not much you can do. But people could at least be
honest about it. And if you’re happy with the personal gains that are a result of all the above …
at least admit that you’re essentially a Republican and Pro-Trump … because that’s what it
comes down to.

That’s my two cents on that … or perhaps a buck or two.

And back from Gennaro:

Steve,

I don’t see how you can accuse many liberals of hypocrisy if they hate Trump and his
Republican supporters but are happy if their 401Ks go up. Most so called liberals were not
happy to see the tax reform. I can only speak for myself and of course I’m convinced that the
recent tax reform is an awful thing driven by the Republican’s need to reward their corporate and
wealthy donors. I wish it had never happened, I wish the corporate tax rate was not decreased by
40% with no way to pay for it, and I’d be very happy if that law could be reversed and the stock
market would adjust downward accordingly.

I don’t know what you want so called liberals to do to show they are not duplicitous in this
regard. It can be recognized and bemoaned that there are many things happening for short-term
benefit at long-term risk. But being bothered by all that and being happy if your investments go
up are not mutually exclusive. Many factors impact stocks, and I don’t believe a stock market
crash tomorrow would be a good thing. I honestly do not want to see the market go up too much
or too fast, but I would like to see it rise at historical percentages over time. I don’t feel
hypocritical.

Mike
And my response to Gennaro’s response: A Yaj Ekim Jester Amok graphic of a man with his head up his ass, with the caption, “You cannot win an argument against ignorance.”

And Steve’s response to my response: LOL

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Suicide Rate Rising

Moi: It all depends what any given person is willing to endure in a game they will inevitable lose anyway.

Steve: At least you get to control your death ... in a world where the ability to control much about your life is dwindling to near zero

Moi: As long as you don't wait too long.

* * * *

A woman named Elizabeth Castro had posted links to my first website created during a six-week course at Humboldt State in 1999. Below is an email sent to update it to the website licensed by Network Solutions and hosted on the Creative Alternatives server:

New Gallery Entries

November 30, 1999

Thanks to all of you who have submitted entries for my "Created with HTML 4 VQS Gallery" page. I've finally gotten a new set of links up and running. Take a look. While this is one of my most time consuming jobs, it's also one of my favorites. I love seeing what you've all created with my book. In this new batch, you'll find Michael Holshouser's Zen musings, Michael Spry's compelling discussions about adoption (and theme parks), Phil Silva's wooden bows, John Clifton's Sydney Electric Train Society page, Heather Butlin's gorgeous hand painted silk scarves, Martha Cox' Go Take A Hike site, David Johnson's Tierra Pintada studio, and much more.

I've also added "New" flags so you can quickly pick out the new offerings. Please let me know if you find corrections that should be made. Thanks.

And yes, I do plan to split the Gallery entries into multiple pages, just as soon as I can!

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Elizabeth Castro: Contact Me

There was a time when I responded to almost all my email. I worried over it morning and night, I spent hours each week. Two things changed. First, I finally realized I simply could not keep up with it. And second, I began to get more than 300 spam messages a day. Nevertheless, I know
what it's like to feel completely stuck and not know where to get help. I have provided a help forum here on my site so that readers can help each other. And here is a contact form that you can use to write me. While I may not respond to every message, please know that I do read them all, and appreciate your comments and feedback. I especially like seeing the web sites that you've created!

Only the email and comments fields are required. (My privacy policy is to never share email addresses with anyone. Period.)

Name
Last Name
Email
Confirm email
Subject

Your comments here:

Type the contents of this image please:

Thanks!

Elizabeth Castro

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Hey, Liz,

Just to let you know the "Zen musings" you refer to in the posting made on 11/30/99 at http://www.cookwood.com/html4_4e/news/index.html are now at a different web address in case you want to update the link.

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Also, my email address is longer than the field allows:
mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

Thanks for your HTML book, and for sharing my website.

Ciao, ciao,

Michael

* * * *

A fax sent to Bare Bones Software sales department on March 26, 2008, regarding getting an update of their BBEdit HTML software:
I recently purchased an Apple MacBook with Leopard OS X Version 10.5.2. Please send an update of your BBEdit software that was purchased on February 20, 2007. The customer Number was 46763150, and the Order Number 125898515. My email address is mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org, and the registration address is 1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive, Modesto CA 95355-5213. I downloaded your 30-day update the other day, and look forward to using your product for years to come. Copies of all supporting emails are attached.

Thanks,

Michael

PS If you're philosophically inclined, and are interesting in seeing my rudimentary use of BBEdit, check out The Stillness before Time at http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/.

* * * *

Letter sent to Modesto Junior College English professor, Russ Kelly, with a copy of “The Stillness Before Time”:

December 26, 2014

John Russell Kelly
519 Mensinger Avenue
Modesto, CA 95350

Dear Russ,

It popped into mind the other day to share with you what became of one your former intro English students from back in the early 70's. Your kick-start with Vonnegut, Brautigan, and whatever else was on the reading list, somehow led to Camus, Hesse, Voltaire, Nietzsche, Krishnamurti, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Shankara, Nisargadatta, and so many others. They, and all the other adventures this life has offered, gradually unlocked the mind, and sent it on an unexpected journey down the solitary pathless.

Teaching is a tough sport, and I just wanted to thank you for putting up with my youthful foolishness in the way back when. If education is about more than merely getting a job, then I would say, for all your effort, at least in one case, probably more, mission accomplished.

Hope you are doing well and enjoying your well-earned retirement.

Best wishes,

M

* * * *

Letter sent to Ursula K. Le Guin with a copy of “The Stillness Before Time”:

August 30, 2004
Dear Mrs. Le Guin,

After watching the re-make of The Lathe to Heaven last weekend, I scrolled through your bibliography, and realized what a subliminal impact your writing has had on my existence. The Books of Earthsea were a quiet inspiration in my youthful wandering, and I recall thinking many times of Ged as I taught myself to sail. And your interpretation of the Tao Te Ching picked up a couple years back resides comfortably with several other versions on the bookshelf.

So it occurred to me to share with you the philosophical/mystical outcome of it all. A 50-page selection of aphorisms and essays from a large outpouring that began in the late 80’s. Nothing that hasn’t already been said in one form or another many times by many people in many places. Just a new version that bubbled into mind, was enjoyable to jot down, and no doubt could use some more of that endless revising we both enjoy.

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com

Hope you find it interesting, and thank you for your contribution to my dream.

Sincerely,

M

P.S. In response to your website comments about people sending you unsolicited material, I also want to let you know that I’m not looking for you to send this on to an agent or publisher, or for a blurb to put on a cover. This is strictly a sharing thing that you needn’t feel obligated to even answer. Writing is one of the many “general puttering” things I intrinsically enjoy, and playing the “getting published” game is, by my reckoning, a great deal of bother that I have managed, thus far, to get by well enough without.

* * * *

Dawn Eden Fletcher was a friend from the Los Gatos and Chico years who attempted to get my writings published by a number of publishing houses. She mailed out a letter I put together. No word from the Dead Poets Society:

November 14, 2002

Dawn,

Here’s the updated draft of our little letter. Let me know if you have any more suggestions or corrections.
Now the big question is who to send it to. Enclosed is a list of some publishers collected back early in the game. Sent copies off to the ones with addresses and got a small collection of nice rejection letters.

After that, I just decided to give it away in whatever way was made available, which included quite a few copies made at Kinko’s, and the web site designed at Humboldt State.

So at this point, even if no one ever publishes it, hundreds of people, maybe even into the low thousands, have it out there, doing with it whatever the winds of time do with such things. The title really should be The Silliness of Time.

Let me know which publishers you think we should aim toward, and I’ll print up copies and get them to you for signatures.

Thanks,

Michael

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Bantam New Age Books
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

To Whom It May Concern:

At the web site http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com is a spiritual/philosophical work I recommend you consider publishing. The Stillness Before Time by Michael Holshouser is, I believe, a viewpoint that many people would find both interesting and relevant.

Back in the 70’s and 80’s, I owned and operated a bookstore in Los Gatos called Walden Pond Books. If I hadn’t retired, and it was available, this book would be in a prominent position on a table near the entrance. I think it would do well as a palm-sized edition for gifts and carry-alongs. The Stillness Before Time is just a small fraction of Michael’s total writing, so there would be much more material available if it became popular.

Michael may be contacted any of the following ways:

1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto CA 95355-5213

(209) 668-5732 (Home)
(209) 634-9736 (Work)

mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

I hope you will give his thoughts serious consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or comments.
Sincerely,

Dawn Eden Fletcher

* * * *

An unsolicited letter sent care of J.K. Rowling publisher. Returned with an apologetic explanation that they had a policy of not interfering with Rowling’s creative process:

J.K. Rowling
c/o Bloomsbury Publishing
36 Soho Square
London
W1D 3QY
England

New Year’s Eve
January 31, 2007

Dear Ms. Rowling,

The other day I was reading the article about you in Time Magazine, and what caught my eye were the comments about religion, and your awareness of the role doubt plays. Don’t know that you’ll find it of interest, but enclosed is a self-published work that came out of my spiritual free fall back in the 90’s. Not really marketable I’ve been told, but enough people have found it suited them, that now and again I print out a handful on the nearest copy machine.

I’m sending it to you as sort of a thank you for all the enjoyment I’ve gotten from your Harry Potter books and movies. What enviable story-telling skills you have. I’ve never had the knack or ambition to do more than newspaper articles, emails, brochures and the like, and these days about all I’m good for is wandering about and jotting down aphoristic silliness. A curious thing it is, what each of us feels called to do with our relatively few journeys around the sun.

And while I’m at it, thought I’d pass on an idea for a Christmas children’s story that came to mind many years ago, but never got around to being more than an occasional ponder. I’m not sure if the British version of Santa and crew is as crazed as what we do on this side of the world, but because you obviously have the ability to weave it into something fun, you’re welcome to use it free gratis if it appeals to you.

Basically, it’s a story that’s never been fully explained of how Santa Claus carries all the toys to kids around the world. In a nutshell, Santa has an evil twin brother at the South Pole who steals Santa’s magic shrinking bag (much like what you came up with in Deathly Hallows) a week before Christmas. A small band of unlikely heroes (e.g., a couple of mischievous young elves, the errant son of Rudolf, a young dragon who keeps thing warm the Village, and so on and so forth) set out to take on dark elves, dragons, werewolves, sea creatures and other evil sorts at the bottom of the world. After a variety of near-calamitous adventures, they, of course, win back the bag just in time to save Christmas.
Kind of passé nowadays (what with Lord of the Rings, Dragon Riders, Eragon, Earthsea, Star Wars, the Grinch, Rudolf, your stuff, and who knows what else), but it might have done something twenty or so years ago when it first came to mind. And it still might be a kick given the right imagination, writing ability and illustrations. Who knows, you might knock out another niche in storytelling history. So, although you no doubt already have a feast of prospects and commitments, this little morsel of an idea is yours if you want it (Yes, this can be considered a binding legal release -- I’m planning, dullingly bureaucratic as it is, on keeping my day job). Or, if you’re not interested, but know someone who is, feel free to pass on. It would just be interesting, if it has redeeming value, to see it come to some sort of fruition.

I’ll sign off here with a last congratulations on your on having been able to accomplish your dreams so eloquently. It’s very pleasing to know that someone reasonably deserving has done well without trampling over others to get there. I look forward to seeing all the ways in which you will use your influence and means to do good things for family, friends, acquaintances and who knows how many strangers. And also, of course, to reading whatever creative enterprises are brewing away in the epicenter of your most excellent imagination.

Well, it’s New Year’s Eve, and time to wander into the night to celebrate the beginning of yet another year with a pint of amber ale and a shot of something cognac. And after that, the annual viewing of The Lord of the Rings into the wee hours.

Enjoy the show. Best wishes, always.

Sincerely,

M

* * * *

Email to Jeff Nichol, one of the many former bosses at Creative Alternatives, on December 6, 2015

Yo, Colonel Jeff,

Good seeing you last night. Congrats on what looks like the third-time-is-a-charm match with Carrie. Below for your amusement if the rabbit hole ever beckons are the website and other key links to what I’ll be leaving behind for what dreams may come – somewhere in the neighborhood of 4,000 pages of babble-on at this writing, and the main reason I retired – with the customary vanity-vanity-all-is-vanity caveat. A curious fate to have been tasked – nothing I would have ever even guessed in the way-back-when – but so it goes.

Meanwhile, keep on keeping on. Stop in at the Geerbucks if you ever have a few hours to burn. Bwahahahaha, so to speak.

Ciao, ciao

M
Website

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

Main Blogs

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com/

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/

PDF's

The Stillness Before Time (53 pages)

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim (505 pages)

The Return to Wonder (3006 Pages)
(Major edit underway – New copy colored blue)
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/thereturntowonder.pdf

Breadcrumbs (1548 pages)

Breadcrumbs 2018 (600 Pages)

Breadcrumbs 2019 (161 Pages)
(First Six Months of 2019 – Look for final copy in early 2020)

Conversations (289 Pages)

Definitions (78 Pages)
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/definitions.pdf

Titles, Titles, & More Titles (145 Pages)
And if I was locked in a deep dark dungeon or cast forgotten upon a desert isle, the one book I would want of all these eyes have read would be the "Ashtavakra Gita" out of the Hindu tradition. It is go-directly-to-the-rabbit-hole-do-not-stop-to-smell-the-flowers-game-over stuff. Everything these hands have scribbled is jabber in comparison. Below are eight translations.

An overview:

Wikipedia: Ashtavakra Gita

Eight translations:

The Heart of Awareness (Byrom)
http://theheartofawareness.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Marshall)
http://theashtavakra.blogspot.com/

Bitten by the Black Snake (Schoch)
http://bittenbytheblacksnake.blogspot.com/

A Duet of One (Balsekar)
http://aduetofone.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Richards)
http://anotherashtavakragita.blogspot.com/

Astavakra Samhita (Wood)
http://astavakrasamhita.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Vedic)
http://ashtravakrageeta.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Shastri)
http://ashtravakrageeta.blogspot.com

The last chapter of all eight translations:
Ashtavakra Gita: I Am Shiva
http://ashtavakrigitaiamshiva.blogspot.com/

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Here's What Each Aura Color Means & What It Reveals About How You're Feeling

Steve:  More complete bullshit.

Moi:  New age babble soars into meaninglessness once again.

I prefer light colors – white, gray, blue, brown – so the car doesn't need to be washed as often. Stick to used cars because I'm frugal, and think it's just downright stupid to be driving around thousands of dollars worth of vanity. I only need to get to where I'm going, and don't give a rat's ass what people I do or don't know think about me or what I drive.

Steve:  Sub-consciously you pick those colors because they align with the colors of your chakras ...

Moi:  Keep waiting for the Mothership to get back so I can go home.

* * * *
Response to a radio article from cousin Steve:

The Population Bomb, 50 Years Later: A Conversation With Paul Ehrlich

Moi:  Another excellent hour of mental masturbation come and gone, and nothing at all changed for it.

... tick ... tick ... tick ...

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

The shocking viral reaction to a prom dress

My culture is NOT your goddamn prom dress.
https://twitter.com/jere_bare/status/989981023076208640

Moi:  More PC madness. Can it get any more stupid?
Steve: Alas ... i don't have a Twitter account ... can't read this


Gave Twitter a bit of a try years ago, but settled on Facebook as more suited for my purposes, and doing very little with it at this writing. Use both mainly to check in on the pulse in the once and awhile. Old School is getting me back in its grips.

Steve: The concept of Cultural Appropriation is just another bullshit means for angry idiots to attack and abuse white people for no reason at all.

What is real is foreigners coming to my country and using my tax dollars to pay for them and their kids ... expecting us to print text books in every language for them ... that's Fiscal Appropriation.

Moi: And not very PC to remind them.

Steve: Yeah ... if you tell them to stop robbing you ... you're racist.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

I Know Which Country the U.S. Will Invade Next
https://www.truthdig.com/articles/i-know-which-country-the-u-s-will-invade-next/

Moi: Dusting off my flag first thing tomorrow morning. Nothing like a flag-waving Fourth of July playing out to the drums of war. We loves our Halliburton Wars. Very ummy-yum-yum.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Listen to Barbara Ehrenreich Takes on Wellness Industry in ‘Natural Causes’ on TuneIn
https://tunein.com/podcasts/News--Politics-Podcasts/Forum-(KQED)-p689/?topicid=121165555

Moi: Interesting. The word "industry" says it all.

Steve: The powers that be will Capitalize anything they can get you to pay for … and Death is a pretty good motivator to buy for most people … but what I get from this is that they are essentially “Inventing” illnesses and Health Maintenance Products … promising you better Health and longevity … which this woman says is bullshit.

Moi: Whatever they can get insurance to pay for.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:
Teen 'obsessed with male sacrifice held pillow over lover's head before plunging knife into chest during sex while dressed as clown’
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/teen-obsessed-male-sacrifice-held-12461875

Moi: The guy had plenty of warning that she was one wacked-out chick. He's lucky she didn't know how to use a knife.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Intermittent fasting: The ultimate beginners guide

Moi: Good article. I've done a variety of fasting and cleansing experiments through the years. These last few spins around the sun, on most days, it's been the wait-until-late-afternoon to do anything more than coffee and water. Even with a considerable amount of time at the gym, the metabolism has slowed down so much in the last decade. Can't eat three meals a day anymore, or I'd be up to 250 pounds within a year. Our attachment to food is always both a fascinating and tiring thing to watch.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

The Sex Lives Of People Over 65 Are Thriving, Study Finds, So There's Finally Something to Look Forward To

Older Americans aren't talking about sex and here's why that matters

Steve: Better living through chemistry … they’ve got pills and supplements now that increase the desire and ability to perform … unfortunately they don’t have a pill to fix deceitful manipulative gold diggers who are thinly veiled prostitutes … who leverage their pussies into a money making machine.

Moi: Money or no, the thought of having sex with an older woman, most of whom have very well-worn, often obese bodies, is so frightening that I don't think any medication would ever inspire me to make the effort.

Steve: It takes money to enabling fucking younger women when you are an old man …

Moi: Young or old, money or no, I'm just not interested in dealing with any woman at anything more than friendship level anymore. My solitude is much too enjoyable. They were intriguing when I was younger and stupider, but there is absolutely no interest in spending that kind of time ever again. Way too much work, way too much bother, and very little return. It's a blessing to be done with it all.
Steve: That’s what extreme wealth affords you … the ability to have interludes of pleasure … followed by solitude or other activities … most men I see Trapped by Marriage etc … never wanted it … they Paid for a woman’s company with a life long commitment … and most of them regret it. Rich people can engage in sex then walk away without commitment … unfortunately that benefit is for the one percent.

Moi: I'm doubtful at this point whether I'd even bother about it if I was rich. Women just aren't that interesting to be around for any great length of time anymore.

Steve: That’s my point … and the foundation of the prostitution industry … there’s a saying that you’re not paying a prostitute for her company … you’re paying her to go away after you’re done … I believe it’s true … it beats committing to a lifetime of stress and headaches … as you allude to.

Moi: Always feel so blessed to have never gotten married (and likely divorced), and never had children that I know of, though the means to capture the Golden State Killer could well someday be my undoing, as well, since both Mom and I did those Ancestry.com DNA tests a year or so ago. What a strange thing it would be to have some young stranger knock at the door, and say, "Hello, I think you may be my father." Wonder how many men are sweating that at this writing.

Steve: It would most likely be the state of CA that would knock on your door … happened to a friend of mine … like 15 years after the fact. He impregnated a women when they were both teenagers … she said she wanted the kid and for him not to worry … she didn’t expect anything from him … and he moved to Colorado … married another women … has kids by her … a whole different life …

OK … so one day the CA Welfare Dept. knocks on his door … wanting back child support for 15 years … with interest … and his current wife had no idea he even had another kid … the whole thing exploded in his face … when he’d all but forgotten about it.

Moi: Very ouch, indeed.

I have a friend up in Chico with an even worse story. He paid money every month to a woman up in Montana or some such place, who he had a couple daughters with, but it turned out she was also collecting welfare. He kept no records of his payments, and had to repay the entire amount, or at least a fair portion. He also had a second family with a couple kids, though I'm pretty sure the second wife knew about the first. Fortunately, he was a high-wire lineman, and had the money to swing it.

Steve: Well I’m glad I dodged that bullet … had one issue with a girl … but took care of it in a more permanent fashion … no loose ends …

Moi: I remember you telling me about that. The trouble is when they don't want to do such things. When they want to keep their trophies.

Steve: Fortunately she already had two … and she hated that … she didn’t want another spud anymore than I did … so much so … we split the cost … it was HER MISTAKE to begin with
… she “forgot” … to take her “Pill” … for three fucking days!

I told her at the time … how can you do that? … I don’t forget to take my vitamins!

Moi: I suspect our DNA is running the show far more than we realize.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

If a Nuclear Bomb Explodes Nearby, Here's What You Should Do

Moi: Be sure to keep a helium tank or a shotgun at the ready, as well. No point in being some sort of Hiroshima survivor as far as I'm concerned.

Steve: Yeah ... like all the water and food will be irradiated ... so what's the point?

Wonder if the Feminists will still be criticizing men at that point ... most likely be begging them for protection ... looking for the ones with the mist guns and ammo ... oh but wait I forgot we won't have any because they're going to take them all away.

And ... like all the water and food will be irradiated ... so what's the point?

Moi: Nothing I ever need to experience.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The Single Biggest Advantage Of Being A Woman In Business

Steve: The single biggest advantage of being a woman in business? … In a word? … Tits.

Moi: Just camouflage for the savvy.

From Sun Tzu's The Art of War by Karen McCreadie:

Master Sun talks often about deception and therefore warns against being deceived by the enemy and underestimating their ability. ‘He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them.’ It’s important to properly assess your opponent without prejudice or assumption.

Steve: The most devious, deceptive, lying, cheating, manipulative, greedy, vindictive, calculating … I could go on … but you get the point … people I’ve even known in my life … were all women … or men … who act like them.
Moi: It always amazes me that you're still interested in chasing them. I can't even imagine putting any energy or money into a woman anymore. Looking at the eye candy ones still, but that is as close as I bother getting. I’m no hardcore misogynist – I’ve had many women friends most my adult life – but I’m definitely not interested in playing the “sugar and spice and everything nice” game anymore. It just ain’t true – never was, never will be.

Steve: Lately I’ve had no energy to do so … I’ve got too much work and other commitments … basic life has become exhausting.

In general the conclusion I’ve come to … is that women are takers … from men at least … they do nothing for a man contrary to mythology … this shit about women being nurturing and caretakers is flat out bullshit … I’ve never met a woman like that in my life … not in our generation and beyond … they fuck whoever provides the most material things … it’s nothing more than thinly veiled prostitution … hell … our President is fucking centerfolds and porn stars … with role models like that … kids don’t have a chance.

Moi: And so self-righteous about it when their gold-digging gets played.

Steve: Women don’t treat the man in their life that they say they love unconditionally … half as good as they treat their girlfriends … or their rat dogs for that matter … most would let their man die if it came down to him or their dog.

Moi: They can fondle their rat dogs – which I consider nothing more than .22 bait – all they please. Fortunately, I am partial to my own company, and prefer sleeping alone.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The amount of fan mail the Parkland shooter is receiving is unreal

Steve: And what does that say about our society?

Moi: We're just a friggin' twisted species. Same monkey, different day.

Steve: There's something wrong with a woman who is turned on by a mass murderer.

Moi: Alexander, Caesar, Hitler, Napoleon, Manson … all had their camp followers.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Tonight’s Powerful, Healing Full Moon will have a Transformative Effect on our Relationships.
https://www.elephantjournal.com/2018/03/tonights-powerful-healing-full-moon-will-have-a-transformative-effect-on-our-relationships/

Moi: What a loony species we are.
Steve: My sister Debby believes this kind of shit.

Moi: Debbie is just one of many. I did my share of hanging with all sorts of people with all sorts off-the-wall delusions, but never bought into any of them.

Steve: Given the state of the world ... the overwhelming pain and suffering it is to open ones eyes each day ... I can't blame people for wanting to escape ... but have more respect for the ones that actually do ... by checking out ... that takes true courage ... and have always found it odd that they are labeled coward ... mainstream group think twists everything backwards ... it's all lies and manipulation ... to keep you on the treadmill.

Moi: True, true. What motivates any of us who see so much to continue on is indeed a mystery.

Steve: The only thing that keeps me going is the hope ... however delusional ... that I'll get to some point where I'll be able to reach a plateau to rest and relax for a few years before I check out ... it seems so far away I don't know if I'm going to make it.

Moi: You certainly endure a lot. Wish you could get out and enjoy it now.

Steve: Minimum is 3 years ... more like 5 though.

Moi: Ugh ... but oh well ... stiff upper lip ... carry on.

Steve: Been carrying on my entire life ... I don't understand people being afraid of death ... when I think of it ... it literally feels like it will be a relief ... I'm looking forward to it.

Moi: I feel the same. That's the big reason I retired early. Was just too baked to want to carry on. And I've never done anything compared to what you do.

Still hanging with the Portland woman?

Steve: In general ... but as we only see each other every few months ... I don't see how this is going to work ... she's nice and pleasant to hang out with ... if I were retiring in less than two years it would be realistic ... but doubt this for five years doesn't make sense.

Moi: Probably depends on what her options are in the tick-tick-tick of it all.

Steve: Well, I'm reasonably sure we'd both prefer to see someone more often ... I'm feeling pretty isolated on my end and need to get some social contact ... although the lack of free time ... all consuming job ... long commute ... and ever increasing health issue ... make it difficult ... no energy or time left over to have a social life.

On her end a development that is impacting her a lot ... is her mother who used to live in the Bahamas became ill a couple of month ago ... almost died ... she moved her to Portland for 6 months ... with the plan to share taking care of her between her ... and her sister in Canada. So the girl in Portland’s life ... is consumed by taking care of her mother now ... it’s completely changed her life.
Moi: Nothing easy about this getting old for any of us.
Steve: The girl in Portland … doesn’t seem to realize how fast she’s going to get old … she’s my age … 57 … and when I’ve mentioned to her that I really don’t see enjoying life beyond 80 … she’s shocked. She thinks she’s going to be doing Zumba classes at the gym into her 90s … her mother is like 77 … and is falling off a cliff … half blind … disoriented … heart problems … and I don’t see her living more than a couple more years. So Christine … that’s her name … is starting to realize that in 20 years that could be her.

I told her that your health declines in your 50s and accelerates in your 60s and 70s … my Father was exceptional … not many make it to 95 with few problems … I’ve got more health problems in my 50s than he had in his 80s.

I just think a lot of people don’t realize how short life really is … they’re all walking around thinking they’re going to live forever … and most pointedly … that they’re energy and health will be the same up until they are old. And this idea that you’re going to work until you’re 67 or 70 is essentially working until you have no life left for the most part.

Moi: Only 16 years until 80 at this end, if I make it that long. Doing better than many if not most of my high school peers, but the decline is evident every day in many ways. The day-to-day is pretty much about preservation and maintenance anymore.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Historical Evidence That Jesus Rose From the Dead
https://www.westernjournal.com/historical-evidence-that-jesus-rose-from-the-dead/

Steve: What a load of total SHIT!

Moi: What is scary is how friggin' many people believe it.

Steve: And why would you worship a murderous narcissistic tyrant of a God like the one in the Bible anyway? He was an asshole … worse than Trump … if he'd had a smart phone he would have tweeted for eternity … no wonder Satan bailed on him.

Moi: I'm just not into duality or idolatry or groupthink.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

No, There Is no Such Thing as ADHD
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-theater-the-brain/201503/no-there-is-no-such-thing-adhd

Moi: Put any kid out in a natural setting playing and working, and Mother Gaia will teach them everything they need to know.
Steve: We've created an artificial world that makes people sick ... physically, mentality, and emotionally ... then we diagnose them as having some disorder ... and drain them of their finances via the corporate medical complex ... then push them out on the streets ... then wonder why they go postal.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

Take the President's Finger Off the Nuclear Button

Cliff: How about we just take his fingers off … Period. And then take his brain and put it in a jar … on display at the Smithsonian. Of course this will have to happen soon while there's still a Smithsonian. But with the lamesest republicans (and gutless democrats) in the history of the country, what are the chances of getting this buffoon out of office?? Slim to none it seems … He's just a sad commentary on human behavior. Sometimes it seems like having a ringside seat to Armageddon … and I didn't even buy a ticket.

Moi: An interesting thing to be witness to our rise and decline, that's for sure. Very disappointing, very pathetic, to say the least. One wonders what Caligula or Nero would have done with Twitter?

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

"A Duty to Warn" and the Dangerous Case of Donald Trump

Cliff: This shows it pretty damn clear...he's absolutely, positively unfit to be POTUS.

Still waiting for some insider to take one for the country...maybe a congressperson with a terminal illness, or a cook or butler with the same. He needs to be gone.

When Mueller exposes his illegalities with Russia, he'll most likely wag the dog with a nuke to N Korea or some such diversion tactic. He is one dangerous man.

Moi: And itching to use that briefcase to off North Korea. Whoever's going to do the right thing shouldn't wait too much longer.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

Why Liberals Aren’t as Tolerant as They Think
Cliff: This sounds mostly true, and fairly interesting ... but to this day I still cannot see how anybody thinks DT is presidential. Or intelligent. Or in anyway fit to be president of the USA. Just baffling.

Moi: It is beyond-all-pales boggling, indeed, indeed.

* * * *

Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

This is how your world could end
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/09/this-is-how-your-world-could-end-climate-change-global-warming

Cliff: I think I'm ready for it ... so much crap going on in the world it's just a bit much to even try to follow it. I'm looking for a cave to crawl into. A warm tropical cave preferably. If these aren't the end of times, it sure is putting on a good show for us.

Moi: I think we'll manage to get through it tolerably well in the relative sense, unless there's a comet or a nuclear holocaust, but pity the future, that's for sure. Anyone age 40 or younger, maybe even 50-ish, is screwed by my reckoning.

Worldometers
www.worldometers.info/world-population/

Poodlewaddle
http://www.poodwaddle.com

Cliff: Yep. I really don't recall anytime in the past when the future looked so bleak. I thought Nixon was a sick enough politician but number 45 is in a class by himself. I feel sad when I think of my 3-year-old granddaughter ... what kind of world will she grow up in?? If 45 prevails, it won't be a pretty one.

Moi: The one-percenters and their minions just keep chip-chip-chipping away at everyone who allows it.

Oliver Stone's "The Untold History of the United States." Well worth a watch if you haven't seen it.

Wikipedia: The Untold History of the United States
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Untold_History_of_the_United_States

Netflix: The Untold History of the United States
https://dvd.netflix.com/Movie/Oliver-Stone-s-Untold-History-of-the-United-States/80127997?strackid=70d3655ea812fc20_1_srl&trkid=201891639

Amazon: The Untold History of the United States
https://www.amazon.com/Untold-History-United-States-
Back and forth with Cliff McFelter on an article I sent:

Chilean Economist Manfred Max-Neef: US Is Becoming an "Underdeveloping Nation"
https://www.democracynow.org/2010/9/22/chilean_economist_manfred_max_neef_us

Cliff: Not to mention that the US is becoming the laughing stock of the rest of the world. Heard a hilarious comedy routine from the Australian PM ... he nails the absurdity of DT. It's just off the charts right now. The most unfit man in the world, at the helm of a once great nation. And due to the massive hypocrisy from the repub house and senate he's going to skate on all the obstruction charges and such ... it's a sad situation for sure. He truly is a sad excuse for a leader ... or for that matter ... a human being.

Moi: Pathetic beyond all bounds, indeed, indeed.

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Back and forth with Ninos David on an article he sent:

The most ambitious country in the world?

Wikipedia: Kiasu
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiasu

Kiasu is a Hokkien (Chinese dialect) word that comes from ‘kia’, which means afraid, and ‘su’, which means to lose: fear of losing out. In 2007, the word was included in the Oxford English Dictionary, where it’s described as ‘…a grasping, selfish attitude’.

In practical terms, this means Singaporeans hate missing out and love a bargain. They will queue endlessly for the latest model of a phone or even a limited edition Hello Kitty toy in a McDonald’s Happy Meal. Singaporeans themselves joke about their ‘elbows out’ mentality at buffet meals, piling their plates as high as possible. And going to a food court means quickly coming to terms with the Singlish word ‘chope’, which means reserving a space while getting food by putting something such a packet of tissues or umbrella on the table.

“Kiasuism is still rather controversial as a behaviour,” said local literary critic Gwee Li Sui. “Nobody likes it done to them, and yet many quite happily practise it. When we see others show it, our feelings range from awe and mild amusement to annoyance and embarrassment.”

Moi: We've got 7.6 billion people on this planet. We've gone up over 6.5 billion in the last 200 years. It was about 2.5 when you and I were born. Worldometers has us hitting 8 billion in 2023 and 10 billion in 2055. My bet is kiasuism is in its infancy.

Worldometers
https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/
Ninos: Will be gone by then, enjoy your coffee.

Moi: That I do, indeed, indeed. I've long since reached the point where doom and gloom set the happy endorphins ablaze. The Dark Side ain't dark to me, is one of my regular quips.

Ninos: That is areal and meaningful success in life. Others will get jealous of you for where you stand.

Moi: I bask in envy, too.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

South Carolina lawmaker pulls out loaded gun during constituent meeting, audience says

Steve: The problem with this article is it's presenting it as though he did something wrong ... if he was legally licensed and had a right to carry it there shouldn't be any problem with it ... the problem is the reaction of the fucking Nervous Nellie's that think that simply Having a gun on a table is some kind of a threat to them ... people are way too sensitive about this ... they're freaked out ... there's more of a problem with people's reaction than anything else from what I can tell

Moi: PC times ... funny in a sad sort of way.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Aging Populations Will Challenge Healthcare Systems All Over The World

Steve: Yep ... this will collapse our economic system ... having a decreasing young population ... many being put out of work by automation and AI ... supporting an every increasing population of old people ... is not sustainable. Medicare and Social Security will bankrupt the country ... so they will reduce benefits ... and up the retirement age ... for a country that doesn’t want to hire old people. We’re going to see a huge population of old sick homeless people ... dying on the streets.

Moi: The future grows darker every day.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Airmen fired, demoted over dinosaur puppet video

Sounds like they just wasted all the investment in training them ...
True, true, but maybe there's too much of this sort of thing going on, and they feel the need to send a shock wave through the system.

Sun Tzu and the Lesson of the Concubines

Them puppets are a threat to law and order ...

But who are the puppets, really? The next Halliburton War is queueing up.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

You Can't Handle the Truth – at Least on Twitter
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/you-cant-handle-the-truth-at-least-on-twitter/

False information spreads much faster and farther than the truth on Twitter—and although it is tempting to blame automated “bot” programs for this, human users are more at fault.

Moi:

Truth, what is that, anyway?

or ...

Truth, what a concept.

or ...

Truth, just another lie.

or ...

Truth, the five-letter T-word.

or ...

Truth: Yours or mine? Hers or his? Theirs or ours?

or ...

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Back and forth with Chuck Hooper on an article I sent:

You Can't Handle the Truth – at Least on Twitter
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/you-cant-handle-the-truth-at-least-on-twitter/
Chuck:

There’s no more truth.

PSA in which fake Obama warns about ‘deep fakes’ goes viral
https://view.yahoo.com/show/nbc-today-show/clip/61099875/psa-in-which-fake-obama-warns-about

Moi: Yowza! Makes photoshopping look pretty tame.

Truth, what is that, anyway?

or ...

Truth, what a concept.

or ...

Truth, just another lie.

or ...

Truth, the five-letter T-word.

or ...

Truth: Yours or mine? Hers or his? Theirs or ours?

or ...

Chuck: Good titles. Write the book.

MoI: I have written the book – over 4,500 pages at this writing ... for almost 30 years now ... it could be 45 one hundred-pagers ... or 90 fifty-pagers – but it can’t compete with the Kardashians and Donald Trump, much less Harry Potter. My best-case fate is being on the reading list of some future Dead Poets Society. Joy to my wind-swept bones.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Duke Students Who Hijacked Alumni Event: Punishing Us Would Hurt Us Mentally
https://reason.com/blog/2018/04/20/duke-students-alumni-protest-university

Steve: What a bunch of shit ... they should be expelled.

Moi: The last line catches it: The student activists of 2018 require a lot of hand holding as they overthrow their oppressors.
During the rebellions of our youth, I can't recall expecting authority figures to be in any way interested in our mental health. Note to kids: Life is not fair. So it goes, too bad, so sorry, oh well, deal with it, get over it, move on. You're not the first, and you likely won't be the last (unless someone pushes the nuclear button or ebola weaponizes).

Steve: I can't believe someone uses a bull horn to disrupt an event ... for an institution they're getting an education from ... then claims that being disciplined for doing so ... is causing them undue mental stress ... it's absurd.

Moi: There appears to be no inanity which will not be explored to its full potential.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Famous Cocaine Mule Sentenced to Eight Years

Steve: She's guilty as all fuck ... and blaming it all on the guy ... she's a whore as well ... oh ... excuse me ... I mean an Escort.

Moi: We all use what we got.

From Mission: Impossible II

Mission Commander Swanbeck: [during a breifing in Sevile, Spain] Ms. Hall and Ambrose had a relationship which he took very seriously ... she walked away and he's been wanting her back ever since. We believe she's our surest and quickest way of locating him.

Ethan Hunt: And then what?

Mission Commander Swanbeck: Make sure she continues to see him, gets him to confide in her, and report to you.

Ethan Hunt: You made it sound as if I was recruiting her for her skills as a thief.

Mission Commander Swanbeck: Well then I misled you, or you made the wrong assumption. Either way, we are asking her to resume her prior relationship – not do anything she hasn't already done ... voluntarily, I might add.

Ethan Hunt: No. She's got no training for this kind of thing.

Mission Commander Swanbeck: What? To go to bed with a man and lie to him? She's a woman – she's got all the training she needs.

Google Images: Melina Roberge
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Melina+Roberge&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Steve:
How do you write women so well?
https://youtu.be/pBz0BTb83H8

Moi: Reason and accountability ... One of my favorite movie clips of all time.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

I paid off my wife’s student loans — then she filed for divorce after two years of marriage

Steve: Jesus ... glad I dodged that bullet.

Moi: Have gun, will travel.

Steve: They never talk about how women use men financially and materially ... this kind of thing is just as bad in my opinion as physical rape ... the metoo movement should acknowledge that women use sex and emotions to manipulate men and use them ... and the man is left feeling violated. Any man who has bought a woman dinner and taking her out on the town and then never heard from her again understands how it feels ... it's no different than how a woman feels when she gets fucked and then never called again ... and it's probably a more tangible reason for that and that she was probably just a lousy fuck.

Moi: Take away the dance of our DNA, and what is there between us? We are two very different species.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

7 Forces Driving America Toward Civil War
https://townhall.com/columnists/johnhawkins/2018/04/21/draft-n2473193

Steve: Read the last section ... #7

Moi: Trying to take away everyone's guns is not even going to come close to happening. The guns stores are full of customers, and the gun ranges are, too. Went to the Manteca Sportmen Club the other day, and saw all sorts of things that Sacramento has made illegal. No way is anyone going to let the government take them away. No way will the police or military put themselves in the line of fire even trying. Whoever thinks otherwise is yapping away in the wind. All these young protesters are just wasting their time.

And I think it's less about civil war than the continued descent into chaos, into anarchy. Lots of angry groups, but all of them angry about different things. No way are they going to come
together in any organized way.

They say they want a revolution, well then, they must change their minds ... Evolution is the revolution.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Dems sue Russia, Trump campaign, WikiLeaks over 2016 election
https://a.msn.com/r/2/AAw6YTh?m=en-us&ocid=News

Moi: What a world ... I won't miss us.

Steve: They aren’t going to get anywhere with trying to sue Russia … I’m sure the Russians are laughing it off.

Moi: Boggling how ridiculous we must look to everyone out there anymore.

Steve: Think about it … Russia is threatening us with Apocalyptic Nuclear Weapons as recently as a few weeks ago … and the DNC is trying to sue them? How absurd … what a joke … it’s like going back and imagining that the Germanic Tribes would try to sue Rome for war crimes … they would just march back over your homeland to make a point … like … by raping and pillaging a few hundred more villages … just to snap you back into reality.

Moi: We are so dumbed down at this point that I'm doubtful we're capable of snapping back into anything close to reality.

* * * *

Back and forth with author Bart Marshall on an inquiry made about a new translation of the Bhagavad Gita he’s working on getting published:

Amazon: Bart Marshall
https://www.amazon.com/Bart-Marshall/e/B00MCJS522/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1523803189&sr=8-1

Moi: Yo, Master Bart ... What's the word on your Bhagavad Gita book? Been checking every once and awhile on Amazon, and still no luck ... Hope all's well, or at least well enough.

Bart: Hey Michael, I have several books backlogged, including the Gita, because I'm going probably going to switch publishing strategies. In the meantime, I'd be glad to send you a PDF copy if you like. What's your email?

Moi: Perfect, thanks. My email is mjholshouser@gmail.com. Challenging to know how to put things out there nowadaze. What are some of the others you're working on?

Bart: Hey Michael, Here's the Gita PDF. Three of the others are existing books/letters I've edited into new versions, one is my own story/essays, and one is a book I've helped a friend of mine write. (He's coming tomorrow for a week so we can record an audio book of it.) I'll attach a
page of cover drafts I have for them. Thanks for your interest!

Moi: Yay! It's been awhile since I've read the Gita, so I'm looking forward to the clarity you bring to such things. What sort of publishing strategies are you looking at?

Bart: Looking at lots of things right now. I think I want to move off CreateSpace, and I need to consider the audio book distribution aspect now that I'm starting to do that. There's a lot of new options since I last researched it.

Moi: Just finished the first two chapters. Bam! You've nailed it. Definitive is the word. Congrats.

Bart: Thanks, Michael. I'm glad it's hitting home for you. You probably don't need me to mention this, but please don't share it with anyone. Things have a way of ending up on the internet and I would like to make a few bucks from it when finally published. :) Thanks!

Moi: No worries, I appreciate your trusting me with it. Really great reading it again. The clarity and strength of your translation deeply resonates, as it has with your other works. I am especially fond of your interpretations of the Ashtavakra Gita and Tao Te Ching. Whether or not they make bank, they are all admirable gifts to whoever the mystery is aligning to awaken.

Have pretty much chosen just give away my writings because I'm not energetic enough to market them. Published the original 50-ish page work using Lulu, and am wondering if you think CreateSpace might be a better option if I can ever manage to rekindle some ambition.

Bart: Thanks again, Michael. Those are my two favorites, as well. Yes, CreateSpace is fairly easy to use and plugs right into Kindle and the Amazon sales channel. I am just considering something more independent now that my title list is growing and I'm adding audio books. I may end up just staying with them, however, and distribute audio books another way.

Moi: So many things to choose from anymore. It was so much easier when there were just three black & white channels, and you could look under a hood and see the engine.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

I guess the lesson here is: don’t get divorced.
https://qz.com/1250527/i-guess-the-lesson-here-is-dont-get-divorced/

Steve: This guy is an idiot ... the lesson here is ... never get married to begin with.

Moi: Jesus friggin’ Christ, how lucky I feel to have never endured such an insane existence. Thank god I never got anyone pregnant, or if I did, they've never managed or tried to find me. Would probably be living some well-hidden expatriate existence in Europe or Asia if my seed had landed, especially in one of the more crazy furrows I plowed.

Steve: My attitude towards marriage has been don't go there since I was a child ... I got married once but I had nothing to lose the way I look at it ... she made twice as much money as me ... she never wanted to have children ... and she told me you can fuck other women if you want to but you just have to share them with me ... which I did ... I looked at that as pretty good deal ... except I didn't factor in the insanity issue ... which trumps everything else in the end game.

Moi: Astounding to look back at all the zaniness my lower brain put me through. How fortunate that my fate had another end in mind.

Steve: My mom told me one time that when I was 10-years old I walked up to her in the kitchen and said I'm never going to get married

Moi: My comment to my mom sometime in late college was if there was a little red button that I could push that would erase humankind, I'd punch it without a second thought.

From Reddit. We are not alone.

“I guess the lesson here is: Don’t get divorced.” Ummm… no. Don’t risk it in the first place: don’t get married.
https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/comments/8cfrc5/i_guess_the_lesson_here_is_dont_get_divorced_ummm/

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

This Strange Syndrome Causes People to Think Their Loved Ones Have Been Replaced by Impostors
https://www.sciencealert.com/this-strange-syndrome-causes-people-to-think-their-loved-ones-have-been-replaced-by-impostors

Moi: So many ugly ways to decline and demise. Why would anyone put themselves or others through so much pain and bother? Assuming we are talking final exit by our own hand, the trick is to not wait too long before letting go, to breathe the last breath with a few chips on the table. Wait too long, and it is a pointless roller coaster ride for you and everyone around you.

Thanks for the links you've been sending. I'll be adding them to my blog in some near soon.

Final Exit and Related Links
https://finalexitandrelatedlinks.blogspot.com

Don't know if you've done your will yet, but you really should at least put me down as your angel of death on the power of attorney documentation.

Steve: Working on finding an attorney to do the trusts ... my accountant is going to refer me.

Moi: Might not want to wait too long, or it could well be she-who-must-not-be-named running your show. You might consider doing some temp thing just to make your do-not-resuscitate intentions clear.
Google Search: Do Not Resuscitate Forms
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=do+not+resuscitate+forms&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

From ‘fire and fury’ to peace prize? Some talk of a Nobel award for Trump on North Korea.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/from-fire-and-fury-to-peace-prize-some-talk-of-a-nobel-award-for-trump-on-north-korea/2018/04/30/2b7f2182-4c8a-11e8-84a0-458a1aa9ac0a_story.html?utm_term=.692ea41c94de

Moi: Irony and paradox rule.

Steve: Yeah ... we live in a world where people who threaten a nuclear holocaust ... are candidates for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Moi: The planet of the apes, indeed, indeed.

Steve: Obama didn't deserve one either ... he perpetuated a war his entire 8 years ... and oversaw more drone assassinations than any other President

Moi: Boggling the decisions leaders of this world do to perpetuate their tribal calling.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

'I'm Not Happy. I Want to Die.' Australia's Oldest Scientist Will Travel to Switzerland for Assisted Suicide
https://time.com/5260855/australia-david-gooddall-euthanasia/

Moi: At sixty-four in an already so-so body, I can't imagine bothering to go on another forty years. Why anyone would travel across the world to off themselves is what's odd about it. Who needs government or any other sanction to make that kind of decision? Helium, gun, rope, rocks in the pockets ... Just do it.

Steve: Maybe he wants to have one last really good chocolate bar before he checks out.

Moi: Sweet is sweet, salty is salty, sour is sour, bitter is bitter, umami is umami. I'm sure a Snickers would do just fine. His tongue probably doesn't work all that well anymore anyway.

Steve: Swiss Hooker? ... with a Snickers Bar in her cleavage? ... who knows ... LOL

Moi: If anything like that still drew him, why would he want to off himself?

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Conversations Michael J. Holshouser 148 of 289
Dennis and Kimberly Quaid officially divorce, she gets $2M in spousal support

Steve:  This guy has been cheated on and taken to the cleaners more than once … why any man with this kind of money and wealth would ever get married … I don’t understand:

Moi:  Because our dicks convince us over and over that we're in love ... and that she really loves us.  A boggling that plays out in our heads again, ever again.

Wikipedia: Dennis Quaid
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Quaid

Moi: Three kids all total, so his DNA is happy.  Saw him and his band, the Sharks, last year on the free stage at the county fair.  He was incredibly energetic for a guy only a year younger than me.  I figure drugs – the Wikipedia article talks about heavy cocaine use at one point – or way out there in middle-age wacko land.  Easy to see why his relationships aren't the forever kind.

* * * *

Back and forth with Chuck Hooper on an article I sent:

This Timeline Shows The Entire History of The Universe, And Where It's Headed

Chuck:  Sooooo, maybe I am NOT immortal.

Moi:  You are, but formlessly, indivisibly so.  Detach from the mind-body identity, and discern your true Self in the timeless, prior-to-consciousness, pure awareness, unborn-undying zone.

Chuck:  Oh.  Zombie?

Moi:  No, I think you're going to have to dig a little deeper than Hollywood fare.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Americans Are A Lonely Lot, And Young People Bear The Heaviest Burden
https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/01/606588504/americans-are-a-lonely-lot-and-young-people-bear-the-heaviest-burden

Steve:  Yeah ... problem is our entire culture and economic system is firmly grounded in continuing that ... it's a business model ... make you sick ... then sell you shit to alleviate the pain ... just long enough to sell you some more.

Moi:  The trick is to learn to stand alone, and enjoy the solitude.
Steve: I need a balance ... definitely need solitude ... but need connections as well ... and am not getting that at all ... work ... and life's logistics ... is all consuming ... my only down time is relaxing on my couch.

Moi: A brief respite coming your way this Saturday.

Steve: Looking forward to it.

Moi: Me, too.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a radio article he sent:

Listen to Who's Watching Us?

Moi: Despite the fact that we all being algorithmized, how many are willing to shut everything off?

Steve: It’s not really possible ... but you can minimize it ... have as few devices connected to the Internet as possible ... don’t buy a thermostat that is Internet enabled ... yes ... I actually know people who have these.

All devices that run on electricity will be Internet Enabled in the near future ... you won’t be able to buy ANYTHING that isn’t ... BUT ... you don’t have to connect it to your network ... like toasters and refrigerators. Some device will be problematic though ... like your TV ... Stereo ... PC ... etc. ... if you don’t connect them ... they won’t run in the long run ... Because they require getting updates over the Internet to keep up to date ... some of them will be designed such that they won’t even run without an Internet connection ... so imagine your stereo won’t turn on if it’s can’t sense an Internet connection ... nor will your TV or PC ... they will be totally dependent upon having an Internet connection. You will be forced to buy Internet services or be completely isolated.

And ... all of these devices ... your PC ... your TV ... your Stereo ... you Phone ... are ALREADY LISTENING AND SEEING EVERYTHING IN YOUR HOUSE ... they are doing this now ... I know people who don’t believe this ... they are naïve ... this is happening today ... and people are authorizing it when they accept the Privacy Policy.

Moi: Fortunately, I won't have to bother about it all too much longer in the relative sense. Haven't done anything that will land me in San Quentin or Guantanamo, nor are there any plans to anytime ever. Am figuring I can get through whatever's left without too much infringement by "Daddy" Warbucks or Big Brother.

Steve: The net result ... unless you get on the Gov’s radar for what you describe below ... is you get inundated with adds on your Facebook and Phone ... aligned with something you said in your living room the other night ... LOL
There’s a guy at my work that works in security ... and he knows all this stuff ... so he places his phone in front of a small speaker that is playing NPR 24x7 ... so whoever is tracking him is getting NPR around the clock.

Moi: The commercial stuff doesn't bother me. Sometimes they come up with something that is interesting, and maybe even worth adding to my already obnoxiously overloaded collection of stuff.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The 10,000 Year Clock
http://longnow.org/clock/

Steve: I’d be overjoyed if all time based disappeared … and all time referenced technology stopped functioning … and all time based work coordination stopped … and we were forced to reconnect with Natures Rhythms … if you think about it … the beginning of the end for Mankind … was the invention of the clock … we stopped listening to Natures Clocks … and replaced them with Man’s Clocks … and started marching to that artificial rhythm …

Moi: We've been bound by every technology, every concept we've ever created, and the clock is definitely a central player in it all. What it would be to again have only sun and moon and stars to frame our daze.

Steve: Yeah … at least if women’s period cycles were aligned with the Moon … we could predict when they are going to go psycho … and avoid them at those times … LOL

Moi: I think some American Indian tribes had special isolated tents for such times.

Steve: Sounds logical and reasonable to me

Moi:

Menstrual Rites Of The Native Americans

Menstrual huts were also big amongst the Native American tribes. During the heaviest four days of their period, wives would leave their homes and go to this separate menstrual lodge to commune with other women. Since women tend to mense together, these lodges were often quite full and the women inside we encouraged to engage in some serious “girl time” by discussing female issues and indulging in creative pursuits like storytelling and arts and crafts.

Wikipedia: Culture and Menstruation
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_and_menstruation

Google Search: Menstrual Rites Of The Native Americans
https://www.google.com/search?num=20&newwindow=1&clie
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Why Munster’s Attack Matters to Our Guns and Borders

Moi: This our modern world may be covered with asphalt and cement and steel and glass and plastic and every sort of mind-made invention, but it is still a jungle. Pay attention, you might live longer.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Michael Cohen and the End Stage of the Trump Presidency

Moi: We can only hope with fingers crossed and crossed again.

Steve: Toes too ... LOL

Moi: Of course, then Pence will be up to bat, which will only be another shade of zoo.

Steve: Another Christian-Muslim Holy War on the horizon.

Moi: Same dogma war that's been going on since Pope Urban II kicked it off in 1095. The only difference is now it's headed our way.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

NOVA: Climate Change Episode
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/earth/decoding-weather-machine.html

Moi: Some great science going on, and no end of interesting technological countermeasures, as well. There's no denying human impact on this poor little garden world in my mind. But in the face of greed and all its hedonistic and narcissistic tentacles – along with overwhelming overpopulation and never-ending political, religious, and cultural absurdities – all the rationality in the world is incapable of changing the direction we're headed in any meaningful way. All these well-meaning efforts about as useful as band-aids on a gushing wound.

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Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Steve: Read this … it’s spot on … and cuts through all the crap we’re fed daily.

When do you know you're old enough to die? Barbara Ehrenreich has some answers https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/07/barbara-ehrenreich-natural-causes-book-old-enough-to-die

And exactly the way I feel about struggling to stay alive past what I’m estimating for me is about 80 … although it might be less … because … what’s the point of spending your days going to Dr. appointments … constant medical issues … and limping through another 10 years … in pain and suffering … for what? … so you can watch another sunset?

Yeah … I like sunsets … and walks in the woods … and all the rest … but as I’ve got older … which I “Thought” would lead to a resting point … where I could slow down … and have more free time … has not worked out that way … because our culture of “Faster – More – Faster” … and economic system … Capitalism … and my job … have opposed to be coming more stable and relaxing … as if I’ve earned a respite … have become even faster paced … more demanding … more stressful … and intolerable … to the point of breaking me … several times now.

This is no country for old men … it’s unforgiving … and is designed to give you barely enough to keep you in a state of panic over being homeless in a second … if you don’t keep working your ass off … to make someone else rich … so they don’t have to work.

So I’m planning on checking out when the pain becomes too great … and I can’t limp anymore through another day … which I’ve been doing for at least a decade or more to date.

Moi: I like to say to folks anymore that I’m in the fourth quarter of a losing game. The reason I retired on March 31, 2011 – year eight began a week ago – is that I had long-realized time and health are the only wealth we really have, and I was going to spend whatever time and health I have left on myself and whatever adventures come my way. It isn't about a long life, it's about quality in whatever life you have left. I've sat in plenty of waiting rooms already dealing with this cadaver, and have watched plenty of people go out clinging long past anything worth clinging to, and I have no intention of letting the AMA make me into one of their lab rats. Fuck the one-percenters, their minions, and their dead-end world.

Steve: Articulated well … and I’ll add … that where this planet is going in the future … the ones who die earlier … will be the blessed.

Moi:

Only the dead have seen the end of war ~ George Santayana

Only the dead have seen the end of absurdity ~ Yaj Ekim

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:
A millionaire mindset never made anyone rich
https://a.msn.com/r/2/AAvyCPB?m=en-us&ocid=Money

Moi: I'm the wealthiest man in the world as far as I'm concerned. What's the point of slaving away for a beyond-the-pale pile of gold if you aren't going to enjoy the gifts it offers?

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Are your phone camera and microphone spying on you?
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/06/phone-camera-microphone-spying

Moi: Can't imagine how boring it would be to spy on an old man who babbles philosophical bullshit all day. And the only way I'm ever going to kill anyone is if they force me to.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on a couple articles I sent:

Homeland Security To Compile A Database Of Journalists, Bloggers And Influencers
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/homeland-security-searchable-database_us_5ac7f41de4b07a3485e4bb1d

Homeland Security will start collecting data on hundreds of thousands of journalists

Steve: Hopefully, you won't get on their radar ... LOL

Moi: I'm probably on a list or three somewhere, but very likely a ream or three from page one. Any revolution I'm working towards is about awakening consciousness, which the bulk of the human stain is generally quite adept at ignoring.

* * * *

Back and forth with Ninos David on a couple articles I sent:

Homeland Security To Compile A Database Of Journalists, Bloggers And Influencers
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/homeland-security-searchable-database_us_5ac7f41de4b07a3485e4bb1d

Homeland Security will start collecting data on hundreds of thousands of journalists

Ninos: You need to take precaution; not me, I am only a sheep herder from Kurdistan.

Moi: I am indeed a revolutionary, but only of the awakening kind, so it's pretty likely I'm way down on any lists any one-percenter minions are keeping. But if they want to waste time and resources, or lock me up, or put a bullet in the back of my head, that's okay by me. I've done had
way more of everything than it ever occurred to me to want. It's their world, and they can have it. I relinquished all command and control many moons ago.

Ninos: You are free and nothing matters!

Moi: That's what I'm saying. It's just Geerbucks and Club Brenda and Studio 101 for me.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

A neuroscientist explains what could be wrong with Trump supporters’ brains

Moi: Great article. Which is why I keep saying we've got six and an half more years of this absurdity unless Mueller really comes up with something impeachable or indictable, or some hero gets close enough to bring about a mortal end to it.

Steve: Well, I wouldn't advocate or support anyone doing that ... however much I disagree with the situation ... my thought when I read this was ... that I find it odd that we have been reduced to using neurological and psychological Sciences to analyze what is wrong with the brains of supporters of the president of the United States ... I think it's much simpler actually.

Everyone I know who voted for him have their priorities rooted in their wealth and retaining it I don't know anybody who's poor who voted for Trump but I guess that's happening in other parts of the country ... of the three people I know who voted for Trump personally two of them were women and they were Latinas from Mexico and Peru and wealthy people who wanted to cut taxes.

Moi: Must be more deplorables in my midwestern-ish zone. The coastline of Kaliforny is its own little world.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Was reading Wikipedia's slant on Arthur Schopenhauer the other day, and ran across his views on women that closely match how we have come to see them.

Arthur Schopenhauer
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer

In Schopenhauer's 1851 essay On Women, he expressed his opposition to what he called "Teutonico-Christian stupidity" of reflexive unexamined reverence ("abgeschmackten Weiberveneration") for the female. Schopenhauer wrote that "Women are directly fitted for acting as the nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous and short-sighted." He opined that women are deficient in artistic faculties and sense of justice, and expressed opposition to monogamy. Indeed, Rodgers and Thompson in Philosophers Behaving Badly call Schopenhauer "a misogynist without rival in ... Western philosophy." He claimed that "woman is by nature meant to obey." The essay does give some
compliments, however: that "women are decidedly more sober in their judgment than [men] are," and are more sympathetic to the suffering of others.

Schopenhauer's controversial writings have influenced many, from Friedrich Nietzsche to nineteenth-century feminists. Schopenhauer's biological analysis of the difference between the sexes, and their separate roles in the struggle for survival and reproduction, anticipates some of the claims that were later ventured by sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists.

When the elderly Schopenhauer sat for a sculpture portrait by the Prussian sculptor Elisabet Ney in 1859, he was much impressed by the young woman's wit and independence, as well as by her skill as a visual artist. After his time with Ney, he told Richard Wagner's friend Malwida von Meysenbug, "I have not yet spoken my last word about women. I believe that if a woman succeeds in withdrawing from the mass, or rather raising herself above the mass, she grows ceaselessly and more than a man."

Steve: Well, I disagree with the part about women being more sympathetic ... the women I've known only express sympathy as an instrument of manipulating ... to someone they are trying to get something from.

Moi: It's all about them. It always kills me when a woman's husband is dying, and she's got all her girlfriends feeling sorry for her.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Could an Industrial Prehuman Civilization Have Existed on Earth Before Ours?
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/could-an-industrial-prehuman-civilization-have-existed-on-earth-before-ours/

Moi: Anything's possible, but I'll continue to remain happily agnostic with a dash of doubt until some serious evidence turns my mind otherwise.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Vaping now an epidemic among US high schoolers

Steve: That … and Opioids … but the worst impact is caused by refined carbs and sugar … LOL

Moi: I wonder how many young people really realize what painful adulthoods they're in for between now and their demise.

* * * *

The Ding Bear Principle: Waiting for that shot to turn me around was the lazy man’s way I often used to gradually learn the rules of any given game. Trial by fuck-up I’ve been known to call it.
The International Arcade Museum: Shoot The Bear

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Why Are We Just Finding Out Now That All Two Billion Facebook Users May Have Been Harvested?
https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2018/04/05/why-are-we-just-finding-out-now-that-all-two-billion-facebook-users-may-have-been-harvested/#37a86bad5561

Steve: The whole purpose of Facebook is to harvest your privacy … this entire episode is idiotic … Google gathers way more data on you than Facebook … as well as every application you put on your phone … etc etc … they are all greedy money grubbing ethics violating Corporate scum fucks … and yes … I just made that up on the fly … scum fucks … I like that … LOL

Moi: Title of a book, or at least a chapter.

Steve: Corporate Scum-Fucks: How the West Was Won

Moi: And because the one-percenters and their greedy minions are working so hard to build more castles and add more zeroes to their piles of gold, I get to sit around sipping coffee, writing my babble, chatting it up with friends and strangers, watching movies and wandering the web, swimming and working out at the gym, and taking naps and catching rays on park benches whenever I please. Tell me who is richer, really.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The Man Who Spent $100K To Remove A Lie From Google
https://www.npr.org/sections/alttechconsidered/2018/04/03/598239092/the-man-who-spent-100k-to-remove-a-lie-from-google

Steve: Google is the worst ... they make Facebook look like nothing.

Moi: It is generally what happens to anyone or anything that gets too much unaccountable power.

Steve: Europe has completely different laws it's unbelievable how much they protected individual person's rights they literally have by law privacy governors in every area of every country and you have a right to make any company or website or organization erase any data they have on you anytime you want

Moi: What a fucked up country we live in.

Steve: Europe's view is that any data ABOUT you ... you own the rights to.

Moi: Yowza, what a concept.
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Read this article and note the section on Violence. Deaths due to interpersonal violence ... including guns ... has been in decline since the 90s. While rare mass shootings get a lot of attention ... the overall number of people getting killed by homicide is not rising.

More Americans Are Dying From Suicide, Drug Use And Diarrhea

Moi: I'm inclined towards a helium tank, but a gun will get me there less, too.

The issue has never been about guns, but the minds pulling the triggers.

List of Causes of Death by Rate

Steve: Again ... when statistics are framed in the context of multiples of other variables it's misleading in other words if I told you that the cost of something went up by 1,000% but that meant that it went from one penny to ten cents ... it sounds like a huge increase because it's stated in multiples of and originally low-value ... so it tells me nothing to tell me Homicides are 25 times higher in the US and they are in other countries because I can't tell if they're extremely low in those countries ... and I would bet money that the people who formulated that statement are picking the lowest homicide rate in any Western Country and comparing it to the US purely for the purpose of sensationalizing it and making it sound as worst as they can.

The point I'm trying to make is that there is an over exaggeration of the magnitude of violence due to guns ... it simply does not exist ... I'm not saying that gun violence does not exist ... I'm saying that it's not as big of a problem as they are claiming it to be ... and it's lower now than it's ever been in history so why are they claiming that it's an epidemic? that is a falsehood ...

These mass shootings that you're seeing are also caused more by the media than they are buy availability of guns ... guns have been around for a long long time ... so why do we have more mass shootings now? ... it's because of the culture and the media ... they're promoting it by sensationalizing it and making it something that's a copycat popular thing to do ... the media should be held responsible for it just as much as anybody else ...

Moi: Same is true with Trump being in the White House. The media totally gave him a carte blanche ride for the cha-ching that we, John Q. Public, paid out for every inane headline that drove any moderate, relatively sane candidates out of the arena. And we will be paying the price for their greedy folly, and our own complicity, long after you and I have departed this quagmire.

More inanity:

How Parkland students feel about their new mandatory clear backpacks
Steve: Why not just install metal detectors?

Moi: Transparency is so much more PC.

Besides which, how are you going to stop someone charging with a thirty-round magazine blazing away at the line of students waiting to get through the detector?

Steve: It is stressful for these kids to worry about this ... but this is rare ... they have a higher chance of getting killed in a car accident ... it's the media fueling this.

Moi: The media is all about the money. It's a feeding frenzy; truth be damned.

Steve: And I don’t know what the answer is … on one end you have freedom of the press … necessary to provide checks and balances on the powers that be … but … it’s being corrupted into a capitalistic driven junk news machine … driven not by the noble cause of keeping people informed … but for nothing more than working people up into a state of panic … to make money … it isn’t serving its purpose anymore.

But what do you do … control what they are allowed to put out? That’s what they do in China … and North Korea … so they have the opposite problem.

Moi: If there's a solution to this fine mess, it's well beyond my pay grade.

* * * *

Back and forth with Ninos David on an article he sent:

Walking dead of Istanbul: A drug addiction with effects unlike any other

Moi: Yowza, sounds like zombieland is arrived.

Wikipedia: Synthetic Cannabinoids
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_cannabinoids

Wikipedia: JWH-018
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JWH-018#United_States

Google Search: Synthetic Pot
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=synthetic+pot&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Two deaths, 54 other cases of severe bleeding tied to fake weed in Illinois

Ninos: Time to take a break from all this worldly insanity … Thank you for all your efforts in exposing the hazardous world we are living in ... I am tired!
Moi: Just trying to help you learn to laugh at the absurdity of it all. Not easy for any of us, but well worth the attempt.

There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn ~ Albert Camus

The Myth of Sisyphus

Wikipedia

Sparknotes
http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/sisyphus/summary/

The Myth of Sisyphus
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~freeman/courses/phil360/16.%20Myth%20of%20Sisyphus.pdf

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Middle East Drone Wars Heat Up
dailysignal.com/2018/03/12/middle-east-drone-wars-heat/

Steve: That’s the problem with inventing weapons … sooner or later your enemy copies them … and turns them back on you.

Moi: Best to not be anybody's enemy, and generally avoid large gatherings for the rest of our time here is my thinking.

Steve: It's getting difficult to do either.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

NASA Twins Study Verifies Long-Term Health Effects of Space Travel
https://www.space.com/39952-nasa-twin-study-spaceflight-health-effects.html

Steve: My opinion is that we … as a biological species that evolved to live on Earth … can not survive long terms space travel … let alone living on another planet. Think about this … we’re stating on the one hand that a few degrees of change in temperature will doom us to extinction … yet we think we’re going to move to another planet and survive? That doesn’t make sense.

Moi: It boggles me that the leadership of this country would even consider it. A suicide mission and total waste of resources.

Steve: A focal point for distracting people from the reality that we're doomed with no hope whatsoever.

* * * *
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Is everything you think you know about depression wrong?

Moi: Attitude is all, but finding or creating an empowered lifestyle just isn't going to happen for all of us. Takes a lot of inner fortitude and resilience to endure the whacko world we have created. Soma may waylay some of the pain, but doesn't change the underlying form. And what makes us think we should always be happy in the first place?

* * * *

Mark Bava and his brother and sister-in-law, Chris and Cat Asche, were killed in an auto accident on October 20, 2012. According to Lilliana Bava-Braico, Mark and Chris’s mother, the woman who was driving, Amoreena Brannum, was first charged with three counts of vehicular manslaughter. When it was discovered that Brannum had been told not to drive while on prescription drugs, the charges were changed from misdemeanors to felonies. With that she ran, and was found seven months later in a homeless shelter, pregnant. The judge put her under house arrest until after the baby was born. After several continuances, the judge seemed to be leaning towards a time-served judgment, until it was brought to her attention that the woman had posted a number of comments and photos on social media that showed an utter lack of remorse for her actions. After more legal maneuvering, the decision on whether or not to have the issue go to trial was transferred to another judge. Lilliana asked me to write a letter of support, which is posted below.

Mark Bava, Chris Bava & Cat Asche Memorial Page
http://anonsalon.com/bava/

Mark & Chris Bava Memorial
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5eZkxiAmEk

DUI Case Surprise

Woman in San Jose DUI crash that killed 3 people to stand trial after Facebook posts

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Honorable Eric Scott Geffon
Superior Court of Santa Clara County
75 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

May 23, 2018
Dear Judge Geffon,

The issue before you on whether or not to have this tragic incident go to trial, to potentially mete out further punishment for Amoreena Brannum, a woman who killed three people, is not an enviable one. To sentence her to further time, or let her move on with her life, is the question.

I am originally from Hughson, California, near Modesto, was in the same class as Mark Bava, and lived on the same cul-de-sac until our family moved to our peach ranch when I was age seven. Chris was a few years older, and we didn’t become friends until we connected online sometime in the early Y2K years. I never met Cat, Chris’s wife, but was aware of her through Chris’s correspondence and online posts. Mark and Chris were two bright stars: both thinkers, both artists, both with many friends, both living giving lives, both committed to caring for their mother, Lilliana, age 87, who now lives alone in senior housing in Carmel.

From what I understand, the woman who destroyed the lives of Mark, Chris, and Cat has never apologized to either Lilliana or the Court, and has essentially moved on with her life, unpunished, unrepentant, self-righteous, as if the accident was not her fault, perhaps as if it never even really happened. Just an inconvenient, annoying mess, like bugs splattered across a windshield.

From my perspective as an elder in the tribe, the values our culture, our republic, were founded on have gradually descended into a state of narcissistic, hedonistic, sociopathic anarchy. What kind of society have we become to let a woman get away with negligent homicide – driving impaired and uninsured, and this not her first accident – to play the system and get off essentially scot-free? What kind message is being sent to society? What kind of message is being sent to her family, to her friends, to her child? Who will hold the tide if not the judiciary?

Some links to get a sense of Mark:

Mark Bava (19 August 1954 - 20 October 2012)
Hughson Union High School Class of ’72
https://www.facebook.com/301790023189950/photos/a.301810946521191.64321.301790023189950/446697825365835/?type=3&theater

Mark's Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/mark.bava

Mark’s Blog
https://www.blogger.com/profile/04781808645805571682

My Back Pages
https://markbava.blogspot.com/2006/07/writings.html

Some links to get a sense of Chris:

Chris's Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/cbava1
Official Trailer: Exile Nation: The Plastic People
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewi9jX4286g

Google Search: Exile Nation: the Plastic People
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Exile+Nation:+the+Plastic+People&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Amazon Prime: Exile Nation: The Plastic People
https://www.amazon.com/Exile-Nation-Plastic-Chris-Bava/dp/B00POTA9DK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1523398200&sr=8-1&keywords=Exile+Nation%3A+the+Plastic+People

I realize there are many things to be weighed in the decision about Amoreena’s future, but for my part, I urge you to have the issue go to trial, and allow a jury of peers to decide.

Respectfully,

Michael Holshouser

mjholshouser@gmail.com
209-416-7193
1112 Cedar Creek Drive, Unit 4
Modesto, CA 95355-5213

* * * *

Back and forth with Lilliana Bava-Braico on the whether or not the judge was sending Amoreena Brannum, the killer of her sons and daughter-in-law, to trial for felony vehicular manslaughter:

Moi: Hey, hey ... Checking in to see if the judge has made a decision on the trial.

Lilliana: Hi Michael— no word yet!!!! Hope for a decision in July now! Xo

Moi: Have we got in enough letters to add weight to the cause?

Lilliana: I’m disappointed we couldn’t get a letter from the Hughson Historical Society— their excuse was they were too busy preparing for a dinner event and then there were summer vacations— hard to understand— one person in a half hour on their letter head could have done it, but oh well… and Jenene was going to write and get 20 of her people to write was forgotten about like her forgetting to get you Marks article— know she’s busy. But thankfully we have yours representing their home town. We did get a good response in the beginning that should get the Judges attention. Thanks for asking and your help Michael.

Moi: I guess most people are just too overrun in their lives anymore to deal with things outside whatever rut they've settled into.

rut1 | rat |
noun

1 a long deep track made by the repeated passage of the wheels of vehicles.

2 a habit or pattern of behavior that has become dull and unproductive but is hard to change: the administration was stuck in a rut and was losing its direction.

rut

noun

1 the car bumped across the ruts: furrow, groove, trough, ditch, hollow, pothole, crater.

2 he was stuck in a rut: boring routine, humdrum existence, habit, dead end.

Lilliana: I remember it well, that collective rut - I paid my dues, it was one of my reasons for leaving Hughson!

Moi: Hardly know anyone there in any meaningful way anymore. It's not even close to being the same town I grew up in.

Lilliana: Wow – and I thought it was only me!

Moi: Nope, I'm only here until Mom departs, and then it's up to Arcata or Eugene, or some such out-of-Dodge place.

Lilliana: Good for you!

Moi: And she's still going almost 89-strong, so I'm not betting I'll ever escape ...

Lilliana: Take her with you – that's what my boys did, people wrote of us that we traveled as a pack!

Moi: Alas, she has no interest in leaving Motown. All her bridge buddies are here, and she's never been much for adventure. It's a curious thing to have lived the life I have, coming from such domesticated roots.

Lilliana: Oh too bad. Wow, you must have fell very far from your roots! Lucky you have the gift of writing to sustain you in the meantime then.

Moi: It is the salvation that the inexplicable shaped to its own purpose.

Lilliana: I relate to that- my art has been my salvation through this journey – painting, like writing is a lonely profession by necessity, but you can do it anywhere.

Moi: The creative mind is a wondrous thing. Both Ann and I have spent our lives creating in a variety of ways. Ours comes largely from Dad’s side. The Kurtz clan is more German Brethren
scientific-rational in its roots. Mom – great soul that she is – shakes her head, and says she’s never created anything in her life. Bridge, mysteries, and television are her outlets. So that nature-nurture mix of art and science is what played out in my life and wordplay. The haphazard forays into drawing, painting, sculpture, and theater have never been anything like what you and Chris and Mark were called to do. Your levels of intrigue are enviable.

** * * * **

A preface to Mark Bava’s essay – My Back Pages – about growing up as farm boys in the small rural town of Hughson during the 50’s and 60’s written for the 2007 Centennial:

I was born and raised in the small rural community of Hughson, California, working my way from kindergarten through high school with a little over a hundred peers at all four school sites: Hughson Elementary, Lebright Middle School, Emily J. Ross Junior High, and Hughson Union High School. For the first seven years of my life, our family of four (Horace, Beverly, and a sister, Ann, a little less than two years younger) lived on what was then a cul-de-sac on the east end of Pine Street. When my widowed grandfather, Horace Senior, married Martha Sinclair in 1960 and moved to her place, we moved to the thirty-acre family peach ranch on Hatch Road. Suddenly, I was a farm boy living in an old wooden ranch house a mile northwest of town, and life changed dramatically. Within a year I was driving an old gray and battered Ferguson TE20 tractor, spring-toothing and putting up and taking down levees; staying up all night irrigating opening and closing gates, listening the water trickle toward the ends of checks with my father; hoeing weeds and pulling suckers off walnut trees interplanted between the peach trees; grading peaches during harvest, and picking up props at day’s end; walking rain or shine with my sister to the Mountain View bus stop a quarter mile away; watching three channels of black and white television reruns in the front living room; digging underground tunnel hideaways covered with plywood; shooting birds in the bushes and fish in the canal with a BB gun; climbing trees and frolicking with dogs and cats; exploring an aluminum corrugated shed filled with tools and whatever; wandering the surrounding countryside planted with planted with peaches, walnuts, almonds, and grapes; converting the second floor of the tank house into a fully-stocked-with-dirt-clods fortress keep; driving a Willy’s post-World War II civilian jeep on a winding and dusty orchard-wide racetrack with my little dog, Jerry, sitting in the passenger seat; sobbing my eyes out on a hot day digging a shallow grave in the roadside orchard, burying Macho, who had finally chased one too many trucks on the busy Hatch Road; carrying out pitched dirt clod sorties with other farm boys, and playing rousing games of tag with them all summer in the canal just across the road at the Tully Road bridge and upstream falls. It was a Mississippi out the front door, and a jungle out the back one. A blend of Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn and Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli, without a Pap Finn or Shere Khan.

Breadcrumbs: Life Resume
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_68.html

Breadcrumbs: Photo Gallery
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_17.html

Ferguson Tractor, Old Commercial
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELQgEa_JXJQ
And the thing to realize about all the physicality of those younger years, is that all the pain and bother – all the hot and cold, all the choking dust driving the tractor, all the gnats and itchy peach fuzz grading peaches, all the splinters picking up props, all the cuts and scratches and tears and bruises and crunches and burns handling equipment, and all the tedious long hours of all of the above – is that the discipline to finish a task, the capacity to endure suffering, the ability to one-step-after-another abide a mundane pace, as well as the recognition of the intrinsic relationship with nature, have all played a huge underlying role in the life lived since. Gumption, grit, resilience, stamina, ingenuity, dependability, steadfastness, critical thinking, problem-solving, and can-do-it-will-do-it attitude, are concepts that ring true in this mind. And are significant factors in the evolution of the frame of reference that has sculpted the philosophical-mystical writings that have poured out since 1989.

Fellow Class of ’72 alumni, Mark Bava, who also lived on Pine Street, and was also a son of a local farmer, caught Ray Bradbury’s “Dandelion Wine” flavor of it all in an essay he wrote for the Hughson Centennial in 2007.

My Back Pages
https://markbava.blogspot.com/2006/07/writings.html

Mark’s Blog
https://www.blogger.com/profile/04781808645805571682

Dandelion Wine
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandelion_Wine

Hughson Union High School Class of ’72
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hughson-Union-High-School-Class-of-72/301790023189950?ref=hl

Hughson Historical Society
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hughson-Historical-Society/169357353116469

Hughson Union High School
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughson_Union_High_School

Hughson, California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughson,_California

Stanislaus County, California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanislaus_County,_California

California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California
MY BACK PAGES

by Mark Bava

"The boys were chasing the city truck
spraying DDT
It kept the mosquitoes down ...
That stuff won't hurt 'em none
I heard the neighbor lady say …"

James McMurtry
from the song "12 O'clock Whistle"

In the central valley town of Hughson, California, canal swimming was a recognized talent. One could almost become hailed in comparable stature to surfing champions on the coast for their prowess in the water. And just as surfers wore nicknames such as Duke, Woody, or Steamboat, we had ace swimmers with names like Frog, who could stay underwater at length, and were rumored to have performed feats that made local legend such as diving from high bridges, or shooting the most gnarly and dangerous waterfalls. To keep the flow of the water controlled over the downhill grade of the terrain, these waterfalls, or "drops," were built at various stages along the large cement irrigation canals that crisscrossed their way through Central California from upland reservoirs, bringing precious water to the valley farm lands below. The most popular falls and bridges also had their nicknames, like Double Drop, The M, or Russell's, named after the family who lived nearby. These favorite spots would often be magically crowded with guys drinking beer and showing off as girls in bikinis watched on. And just as the surfers cruised the coast to check the waves and action in their favorite bays, we would cruise to see who and what was going on at our favorite swimming spots. Some of the waterfalls were larger than others, and most were forceful enough to drown an expert swimmer unless one knew the currents well. Despite the fact that a number of people who accidently fell in or drove their cars in were drowned every year, we grew up swimming in these canals and prided ourselves in our skill to navigate the rushing waters. But even for us, there were some falls with the fury of Niagara that remained unconquered.

Playing tag was the main pastime, with rules and boundaries conceived in some organic fashion within the unique parameters of a large cement canal, rushing waterfalls, canal banks, and catwalks. Aside from tag, another reckless sport was "shooting the falls," which was daring to see who could go over the falls either head or feet first, or on inner tubes or some other random floating object.

Years later at a Hughson class reunion, a suggestion that some of us go swimming in the canal for nostalgia sake was met incredulously with the fact that no one swims in these canals any longer because it is now recognized that pollutants and pesticides infest these waters, not to mention the liability issues that come into play in today's lawsuit-happy world. It's another bygone era. We took chances then, and no one was sued when kids got seriously injured trying to water ski behind cars or dive off telephone poles into the canal. As far as the pesticides, in the town of Hughson, California, as in the Texas hometown of songwriter James McMurty, on
blisterring hot summer days we would peddle our bikes behind a cool mist of DDT coming from the back of the "Mosquito Man's" truck whenever he came to town spraying to keep the local mosquito population down. Back then, DDT was recognized as some kind of miracle chemical that was even sprayed on immigrants arriving at Ellis Island to insure that they didn't bring foreign germs with them into our shining new country. Which was equivalent to believing an advertising slogan at the time that smoking L&M cigarettes was "just what the doctor ordered." And just as McMurty's song suggests, our parents sat outside oblivious, fanning themselves with their evening cocktails in hand gushing, "oh, loooook … awwww, how cuuuute ... kids ... Mosquito Man ..." and would laugh at how adorable we all looked smiling in ecstasy riding along in a cool, wet cloud of pure DDT. From those episodes, I have often stopped to wonder if that is why I have remained free of many viruses now feared. That by all odds, I should have contracted long ago with all my excessive bad habits through the years. Maybe DDT was a miracle drug of some kind.

Hughson was founded in 1907. It was named after Hiram Hughson, who owned much of the land at one time. The Indians had referred to it as "a place of sleep," and it wasn't really much more than a whistle stop along the Santa Fe railroad line. For no apparent reason, its main street is the remarkable width of a four lane freeway, which is absurdly wide for only being seven blocks long. The buildings that lined the street bore facades much like towns of the old west, but of concrete rather than wood. This was the style of architecture that was typical of California valley towns in the early 20th century, that is now being replaced by the latest architectural contribution to the modern Americana aesthetic: the strip mall.

In 2007 the town will celebrate its centennial. There will be a parade down Main Street, the unveiling of a life size bronze sculpture of a migrant peach picker, and a "bean feed" among other events. Somewhere deep in the nostalgia of this small town was this cherished annual event called The Bean Feed that is being resurrected from the annals of Hughson history that was little more than what it's name implies: a town feed of beans and a slice of white bread with butter on a paper plate. But the Bean Feed was a festive occasion. It equaled some of the local harvest parties where a pig would be sacrificed and roasted underground by some distinguished Mexican cooks, pallets of Lucky Lager beer would arrive, mariachi bands would play, and everyone got drunk and danced while us kids tried to sneak off with six-packs of beer.

There was something unique about this small town and the people it produced that is hard to put your finger on. Not that anyone will point out anyone of national importance from there, or a celebrity like neighboring Modesto with its George Lucas who epitomized his town with the movie American Graffiti. But much like the Lucas movie, coming of age in Hughson around that era had a very similar flavor of that which was portrayed that infused its people with a rare down to earth quality that you rarely find in today's neurotic world.

The town on weekend nights was the scene of adolescent youth courting, flirting, getting drunk, and creating general mayhem ... cruising in cars back and forth on Main Street, making U-turn after U-turn at each end and cruising back again, eventually pulling up to others who were parked either along the street or in the dirt parking lot of M & M's Drive-In that took up the whole block at the top of the street. M & M's was our Mel's Drive-In, except occasionally some daring soul would fly into it's dirt lot with their car doing wild donuts and "rooster tails," satisfied at creating an enormous cloud of dust.
Across the street, standing side by side were the town's only two bars. One of these bars was frequented by Mexicans, and the other one by whites, and only a "bad ass" dared to go in either one. In valley towns like Hughson, you were either the toughest, had the fastest car, could drink the most, or risked some other dare devil craziness to prove your manhood ... that you were "bad." Fights and town rivalries over sports and anything else were the fashion. There were always "rumbles" between town football teams in school parking lots after the games, and to even be caught cruising in a neighboring town could prove threatening.

On top of that, the town had a bit of its own racial tensions. Despite the demographic breakdown offered by consensus figures, in Hughson it seemed you were either Italian, Portuguese, Mexican, or "Okie." The Italians had come there to be farmers, the Portuguese to be dairymen, and the Okies were those who had poured in from Oklahoma after the Dustbowl to work the fields in classic Woody Guthrie narrative, to be replaced by the Mexicans years later. There was friction between the latter that probably started over jobs. We knew little of the kind of prejudice that was prevalent towards blacks back then, or of the anti-Semitism discussed in WWII history for example. We had no "Afro Americans" in that town. We had mixtures of everything else. All we knew was that "Negros" produced most of the hit records on the charts, and thought to be Jewish was just another religion. But there was this racism between the Okies and the Mexicans and the two town bars frequently erupted in violence on the street outside.

The town was violent, but only to a point. I watched people get in fights, friends get killed racing cars, and saw a policeman lying dying on the street, shot in a thwarted bank robbery attempt of our little town bank that shocked the town to its core. It was still the Old West fifties style to be sure, but we never locked doors, and the only big robbery we had heard about until then, was when the owner of the Five and Dime was rumored to have previously tried to tunnel into the same bank that was next door. For the most part, the most we feared was getting caught smoking in the school bathroom. Guns were for hunting or shooting mailboxes and stop signs, and they were readily available on our farms but no one could even dream of using one for assault, and certainly not to bring to school or town. It was all fists and feet.

Farming was the industry and peaches were king. The town once held the title of Peach Capital of the World (in cling peaches as Georgia held the title for freestone peaches). The town came alive in the summers as the harvest approached. It was hot, tipping three-figures on the thermometer. We were out of school and working on family farms buzzing in the middle of the season with their smells of Mexican food and sounds of Mexican music filling the air from farmhand cabins. We eagerly waited for when we could sneak away and go swimming in the canals, race cars, or cruise town in the hopes of finding a party or joining the ranks of couples making out on canal banks. On Sundays, neighboring Italian farm families got together following mass for huge meals at long tables with homemade wine and piles of ravioli.

It was a Norman Rockwell portrait of the golden age of postwar bliss. A little ambition would buy the American Dream. Fathers worked and mothers stayed home raising the kids. We had rotary phones, party lines, and operators who knew family names. There were no answering machines to get a message if you weren't home. The latest news was commonly spread word of mouth or through town gossip, and much of that was from Hamilton's Cafe, the community nerve center where farmers convened every morning to discuss their crops over breakfast. Families watched the same TV shows like Bonanza, Leave it to Beaver, Have Gun Will Travel, Twilight Zone, Ed Sullivan, and Combat, a WW2 series showing the last just war our fathers had
just won. Our mothers watched Jack La Lane, As the World Turns, and Queen for a Day, which had to be the most politically incorrect thing since Al Jolson wore blackface. We saw Mysterious Island for 10 cents at our local movie theater. Gas was 37 cents a gallon. We could burn piled leaves in our yards. Dry cleaning and milk were delivered to your door, and the town doctor, a man who seemed to know everything, made house calls. It was all the latest in the modern nuclear age with TV trays, kidney shaped tables, and the Space Race.

Teenagers watched American Bandstand and did the Twist. There was some hushed war in Korea that we knew little about. And then came something called the Cuban Missile Crisis, and our town doctor who knew everything proudly built a fully functioning concrete bomb shelter and began rotating stocks of canned goods.

Soon after came the British Invasion and Mod was the fashion. We started watching Laugh In and Walter Cronkite began to talk about another hushed war in a place called Vietnam. Eventually that war began to claim even the lives of children from this town not on any maps that few had even heard of. People started to wonder as we started hearing of protests.

I watched Woodstock at the local drive in theater as the 1967 Summer of Love arrived in our town in 1969. Marijuana started to replace booze, and we piled in cars to cruise country roads with nicknames like The Crooked Mile to smoke joints safely away from authoritarian eyes with our 8 tracks blaring, listening to the Rolling Stones, Ten Years After, and Led Zeppelin. There were no local police, and we had driven trucks and tractors since the age of 10, and many of us could drive as early as Junior High School. Just as was portrayed in American Graffiti, we lived in our cars, but all of a sudden cruising became slower as we got more stoned.

I tried LSD, listening to Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" over and over on my portable phonograph. I started wearing fringed jackets, paisley Nehru shirts, suede moccasins, or black Beatle boots, and I watched our town become less violent as people cruising in cars flipped peace signs instead of the finger. Rivalries and fighting stopped, replaced by brotherhood and our attempt at being flower children. As we neared graduation, we began to think about the draft and our options other than following the war blindly. We saw JFK assassinated, followed by Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. We saw civil rights movements and civil disobedience. It was the beginning of the end of the last innocent generation, and I was about to graduate.

Following graduation, our doctor who knew everything took his life, followed by my father, whose increasing bouts of depression from a little known syndrome called Manic Depression become too chronic for him to bear. With little time to think, the family farm was sold to pay the inheritance taxes, and with what was left, I went off to art school and to see the world, eventually moving to the coast. I never lived here again.

I never grew up. I never had kids. The rare times I have returned were either for a class reunion, a funeral, or a quick sentimental journey down Main Street when passing within proximity on my way somewhere else, and when I did, I sometimes wondered why anyone settled here in the first place. I have been physically, mentally, and spiritually almost everywhere. I've had my picture taken with Jackie and Aristotle Onassis on the island of Capri. I've sunk a ship in the Caribbean, shot the rapids of the Pequari River, been thrown into a dungeon in Bangkok, and made the pilgrimages to Burning Man in the Nevada Desert. I think I've been a puppet, a pauper,
a poet, a pawn, and maybe not quite a king, but to this day, no matter where I am, there is a maudlin feeling that comes over me with the end of a summer and the coming of fall. It's hard to shake. It's ingrained in me. It's the feeling of a time when the winds come, and the leaves fall off the peach trees, leaving nothing but bare branches as they go dormant for the cold season ahead. The Mexicans would leave town on their sojourns back home for the winter, and the farm would become a deserted wasteland. The canals would go dry. Everything seemed to go black and white. And with all of this, I would have to face going back to school and wait for spring ... when everything would blossom, the Mexicans would return, the music would begin, and we could go swimming in the canals.

Mark Bava is an event producer, musician and artist now residing in Carmel California.

* My Back Pages - song by Bob Dylan (1964)
"Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now …"

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An article in the Ceres Courier announcing the Hughson Centennial:

Hughson Celebrates Its Centennial This Weekend
http://www.cerescourier.com/archives/53932/

HUGHSON CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL THIS WEEKEND

By Jeff Benziger

September 19, 2007

Hughson turns 100 years old this month and there will be a celebration worthy of a hundred-year wait on Saturday, Sept. 22.

A full day of celebration is being organized by the Hughson Historical Society, the Hughson Centennial Celebration Committee, and the city of Hughson. "A Small Community With A Big Heart" is the guiding theme for the free event, which includes an all-day Main Street fair, that is open to the general public.

Hughson's township was filed in 1907. It didn't become an incorporated city until 1971.

From 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hughson Avenue will be converted into a fair. Free entertainment will be offered as well as displays of vintage automobiles, tractors and motorcycles. A Dust Bowl Days display will be available as well as commercial booths for shoppers. Food booths will feed the crowd.

A parade at 11 a.m. will pay tribute to Hughson's past and will feature a wide range of antiques vehicles including a Wells Fargo stage coach.

Activities for the children will include a petting zoo, pumpkin maze, jumping bins, kiddie tractor pull, and Centennial Children's Area.
A larger-than-life statue of a peach picker, called "The Harvest" - commissioned by Oakdale artist Betty Saletta - will be unveiled at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 22 at the corner of Charles and Hughson Avenue. The intersection has recently been rehabilitated into a showcase intersection complete with brick, planters and street furniture. Donors who helped pay for the statue will be recognized on bronze plaques at its base.

Inscribed paving bricks honoring or memorializing family or friends were sold to help raise funds and will be a central part of the Centennial Plaza design.

Hughson was once known for the peaches grown in its fields, hence the harvester was seen as an appropriate tribute.

A time capsule with memorabilia from 2007 will be placed at Centennial Plaza.

"Years ago Hughson used to have a Tractor Rodeo and free beans so we're going to have that again," said Jean Henley, a member of the Hughson Historical Society.

Free peaches will also be given away.

The Hughson Historical Museum, located in the old Gilette Hotel which was moved from downtown Ceres in 1907, will be open for the day. The museum is located on Hughson Avenue.

A wide range of other food will be available for purchase, as well as centennial DVD's, T-shirts, polo shirts and hats. Shirts and hats may be purchased in advance at Bank of the West in Hughson or at the event.

A limited number of bronze maquettes of "The Harvest" are still available. A portion of the purchase of these 18-inch versions of the finished sculpture goes to the Hughson Historical Society.

* * * *

Chris was the older brother of Mark Bava, the Class of '72 alumni who wrote the Hughson Centennial essay above. I only have one vague memory of Chris when I was four-ish years old, when he accidently banged my forehead with a golf club back swing as he was practicing on the front lawn of their Pine Street home. He had told me to get back, but a half step or two wasn’t far enough, and I ran home screaming and bleeding, and still have the vague shadow of a small scar. We re-connected a lifetime later when he somehow ran across my writings online. A curious serendipity that two neighbors from little old Pine Street in little old Hughson, California – who ended up living very different lives – both ended up becoming philosopher-mystics of the god-mind sort.

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Hey Chris,

Long time no hear. What news from the LA zone?

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Hey Mike,
How you doing, my friend? My life continues to be a chaos of insanity with occasional breathes of fresh air. The LA club was sold some 5 years ago, was a great run as we were pioneers in making downtown LA a new hip destination spot. As with everything you can't have up without down, no one sided coins in this universe … the downside, after several severe incidences of pain, a dentist whom liberally prescribed Oxycontin, while I had 17 years sobriety. Little did I know it merely takes 4 days to land one in the horrific net of opiate addiction replete with the same agonizing withdrawals I had when doing mountains of smack. I wasn't a happy junkie, not now, having tried several detoxes, clinics, and other modules of detox unsuccessfully, I suppose I simply relented and as everything I do became excessive … combining all sorts of dangerous potions. Settling on an opiate base line, highlighted with excessive Ketamine use … a psychedelic drug that only 1% of users become frequent abusers of, as it is initially very frightening, then rather intellectually interesting, at least I found it so.

Anyway, our beautiful loft with all our wonderful, healthy friends were being quickly replaced with a much more subterranean, criminal element. Eventually, desperately wanting an out, I had tried several ibogaine treatments in Playas Mexico (interesting treatment, check it out, you tube ibogaine and or google ibogaine.org) a powerful psychedelic that works by creating new brain pathways … I brought 5 (including myself), 3 addicted to opiates, my wife a 37 year nicotine user/abuser … 3 opiates addicts to this day are still clean, my wife dropped smoking the day after her treatment … and me? Well, after each treatment I would zip back to LA where my friend and neighbor lived, is one of LA largest suppliers … well needless to say, ibogaine isn't absolute magic … the beat went on.

Anyway, we decided to get out of that environment and now knowing Playas, as well as wishing to help our friends and their struggling ibogaine center, we decided to move here, Playas de Tijuana … the best kept secret in Baja, we have a penthouse, in a small condo (only 15 units) ours in three floors, smack on a beautiful beach … the top floor, all glass facing the ocean … with a large wonderful deck … the economy, while naturally being impacted by that idiot/criminal Bush is so much more affordable than California. But my addiction, while decreased on the one hand, increased on the K side … apparently my behavior became frightening to everyone but me … I guess, traipsing around the gritty areas of TJ ain't a safe practice at 3 a.m. … though I lived in the lower east side of NYC for a year … and despise what Giuliani has done to NY … sanitized it, removed the soul which was grit and grime … turned Times Square into a fucking theme park. Happy tourists eagerly shopping, no more wild characters spicing up the scenery, the pimps all likely jailed along with their hookers … replaced with tour guides. foot long hot dogs and vendors selling inane t-shirts "I survived Times Square NYC" Almost as nauseating as Vegas. Don't get me going about Giuliani, a disgrace to my Italian heritage … how he used 9/11 to climb the ugly political power game … not the hero the media portrayed him as but a mere poser … ask any of the heroic NYC firemen. The creep utterly sanitized the very soul of my favorite city.

Imagine a crime-free world, first of all an absurd notion unless one happens to be a re-born Christian or an Islamic fundamentalist is entirely fantasy, will never be and if it could it would hell on earth … no Shakespeare, no ee Cummings, Erza Pound, Dostoevsky, or Bob Dylan … Burroughs, Corso. Forget about Ginsburg. Guess you could eliminate every film except Disney fairytale's … even then … you'd have to eliminate Little Red Riding Hood, all of Hans Christian Anderson … without conflict one has little or no fuel for creativity. So my archetypical current
villain besides Bush and his cohorts is Giuliani. This is what happens when power hungry folks get ahold of Democracy and decimate it for their own needs ... God knows why anyone who banks multi millions needs more, and will send young men into harms way, allowing them to perpetuate racism and death. It is beyond me, only that folks become so blinded by chasing an image that they become helplessly attached to attempting to become something they never can ... after all you can't become a basketball star, you can only do basketball ... ain't any sentient being who can meta morph into something that ain't.

Sorry, for my digression, anyway my increasingly odd behavior was alarming to both my wife and Mark, they talked me into interning myself into a Mexican Rehab ... well job done, I am clean and sober ... and have a cause and grist for the mill for a crazy screen play which is almost complete. While this place indeed got me clean any jail cell or locked closet could have accomplished the same ... this beat anything Kafka could've dreamt up ... not to rattle on, I will only capsule my initial internment ... while their web site, highly photo shopped showed happy folks, horse riding, walking very lush gardens, happily sitting in green lawns chatting away. In fact, I was roughly grabbed by four cholo types, rushed down a long tunnel, thrown into what could only be described as a dungeon ... one bare light, so bug infested I had to stick food on the walls to keep the earwigs out of my bed, nothing to read ... certainly no TV or radio ... no human contact with the exception of a staff member only after I would beat on the walls calling them every name I could dream up ... and given Haldol (a medication reserved in the US for patients suffering from generally schizophrenia along with Thorazine called in the US "chemical straight jackets" and whatever else, that caused me to faint twice, once splitting my head open leaving a pool of blood. Was kept down there for 12 days, while they called my wife daily with ONLY negative reports "Christopher is not getting with the program, he has trouble with authority, has threatened to bomb the clinic, etc." Throwing my entire family into a depression, thinking perhaps I had suffered some permanent brain damage, allowing me no contact with family members or anyone else.

When finally allowed above ground, we had to participate in inane "therapies" such as equine therapy and zoological therapy, no module I had ever come across ... I asked what good is riding a horse backwards for a lap around this fucking corral do? They assured me it was excellent for a host of stuff including helping to make new neurological connections that may have been damaged by drugs ... well strike me dead, this is certainly a newcomer on the forefront of psychohology, huh? They also had chickens and sheep, I asked "therapy" they answered yes, therapy. Anyway, it is an outrage, people are being held against their will over 50% for weed ... weed?! Why? One "therapist" told me in no uncertain terms, THC could leave one permanently impotent ... WHAT? Well I'll be dammed, you certainly better relay this info to the majority of California residents who voted an overwhelming yes to medical weed ... we certainly wouldn't want to trade migraines for the inability to get it up ... I asked what about females? Frigidity, or they get a free ticket ... they seemed a bit baffled ... and said weren't sure but weed was bad, bad, bad! I was considered rebellious ... while I found much of it absurdly hilarious ... I am outraged by their money agenda and how easily they are able to trick the families of these Mexican families. Not Mine, but it took 3 weeks before I could have any contact, and they tried their best to interfere and obfuscate my transmissions when finally it became clear we are all outraged and plan to form official complaints to the consulate, and confront Issac at his office demanding changes. You see, in Mexico, two family members without any legal 3rd party can have another family member committed. In the 60's, in south Italy this could be accomplished by either 2 family members, or two public officials ... one American girl had been locked in an
medieval insane asylum for some 5 years before it came to light that family members were committing other family members who had for example epilepsy, for which they were ashamed, etc.

Anyway, probably more info than you need or expected. Anyway, today my health is back, I am looking forward once again to pursue my creative interests and enjoy the surf, looking into promoting benefit concerts to aid our friends ibogaine clinic … and of course, get back on track with my Advaita teacher and looking forward to a hug by Ammachi in San Ramon … hopeful her schedule remains the same. In June for 2 weeks at the sister ashram in San Ramon … I have had the great good fortune to have seen her more than a 100 times … twice I was able to meet UG Krishnamurti, not to be confused with UK Krishnamurti … UG was a wild man … called himself a spiritual terrorist … he yelled at me, "Don't you fucking see, there are no problems, the problems are the solutions!" Great! On the UG website www.ugkrishnamurti.org you can visit the video archives, in particular "I am a barking dog" where he yells at a Indian film maker "Your trouble, is you want to fuck this bitch, why don't you do something?!" He never advertised his presence, you could only meet him by some synchronistic incident.

So there we are, the long and short of it all. Hey, anyone know what's become of Terry Morgan and/or his sister Joanne? John Galt? Kenny Doberenz? I now understand why as we get older there is a tendency toward becoming more serious … like Gurumayi said in a talk while I was in Ganeshpuri … "Life isn't a game you win, it is a game you lose … you lose your hair, your looks, your friends, and then your life." I'm astounded often when asking that question about old amigo's to hear "Oh, she died from cancer, oh, and he died from a stroke" … all us baby boomers are one in all "Knocking on heavens door." While I've escaped the long specter of death it amazes me, a good 60% of those I know who have lived the way I had … are no longer with us, many more brothers and sisters are lingering away in some prison. Forget the fact that nicotine kills some 450,000 annually in the US, 10,000 of which are innocent bystanders. What drug out there can claim such stats even per capita? I have a friend, former professor at Berkley who received life without possibility of parole for a few kilo's of cocaine … while many, many Colombians only got 10 years for multiple tons … I really love our constitution as our founding fathers had written it … not a country anywhere that is as radical as ours … but it is sad, sad to see how in particular Bush has simply decimated something so good with his Patriot Act … I suppose we are almost at that point where the empire shifts from West to East … empires come and go … but ours seems to be fading faster than most … who cares? We live in such a small world, can easily go anywhere quickly and conveniently.

Ok, time to get on our electric scooters and hunt for my precious menudo, if ever you are down south of the border, please, please let me know, you’re most welcome to stop by, hang out and relax in very relaxing environs.

Warmest Regards,

Chris

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Chris,

Wow, what an amazing adventure! Boggling. Harsh. At least you seem to have found some
light at the end of the tunnel. Kudos to your family and friends for sticking with you throughout.

Never met UG, but did read a couple of his books toward the end of my stay teaching at Krishnamurti's Oak Grove School in Ojai back in the late 80's. Definitely one of the many wake up callers. I'd read and listened to J. Krishnamurti for years, but he was dead by the time I got a teaching credential, and going down there was less about him than playing out the teaching game in an interesting environment. Oak Grove was a pleasant experience, but after two years I was done with both it and teaching. Moved up to Chico for a decade, over to Arcata for eight months at Humboldt State, and then back to Creative Alternatives in Stanislaus County.

Coincidently, I ran into John Galt last week here in Turlock working at Custom Locksmith & Alarm at 522 East Main Street, Turlock CA 95380 (209) 668-3606. He sold the hardware store several years ago, and has been trying to figure out what to do since. Said Susan is widowed up north raising her children. No help with any of the others you mentioned, but of my own classmates, many are dead or in poor health, as well. Such a brief stay this mortal theater offers – so much of it filled with such inane pain and suffering.

Well, back to work. Thanks for sharing your story. Quite a life you've led, Mr. Bava, quite a life.

Keep in touch, and take care,

Michael

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Robert Mercer: the big data billionaire waging war on mainstream media

Moi: It's just a friggin' whacko world. When it comes to power and fame and fortune, consciousness can be an insatiable beast. Like you, I'm quite happy to live simply, anonymously, and free of human bullshit as often as possible. Too much money would be a total drag. No way would I want to have to play the philanthropist role. It would be a cruel fate to have to bang heads with the hoity-toity's playing all their insipid hoity-toity games.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Fight or freeze: What we did when faced with a gunman

Steve: Without practice it’s difficult for people to overcome what’s natural … which is to either run or freeze … grabbing a gun is a case by case basis under the circumstances … and most people just do as their told rather than risk it.
But the bottom line is … if a guy is not there for money … in which case he most likely doesn’t want to shoot anyone … but rather is just intent on killing as many people as possible … if you’re cornered … it’s either fight for your life or get slaughtered like sheep …

Moi: Depends on the variables of the situation, and how quick you are to recognize the options.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

California's gun seizure squad finds an arsenal under a bed

Steve: People are already talking about repealing the 2nd amendment

Moi: Good luck to that little fantasy. Kind of like deleting one of the books in the Bible.

Steve: And would start a civil war.

Moi: Like I've said before, am pretty much to the point of ignoring all the politicians and bureaucrats. Not even sure I'm interested in being a human being anymore. Only sixteen years until age 80, if I bother enduring all this aging bullshit that far.

Steve: Perhaps we'll have a major world war ... that will break the monotony.

Moi: Unless the bombs were being dropped in my back yard, even that wouldn't do much. Too numb from the perpetual war we've been waging since before we were born.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Yale's Most Popular Class Teaches You How to Be Happy (You Can Take It Online)
https://www.mydomaine.com/yale-online-happiness-course--5a998df8c718e

Moi: And a certificate, too ... Yowza.

Steve: I'm officially certified Happy! ... by Yale!

Moi: Will check back in on that one tomorrow. Meanwhile, hang it proudly for the other minions of NASA so that you can bask in their envy.

* * * *

Response to a video link from cousin Steve

"Of course ... But Maybe"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O5h4enjrHw&feature=youtu.be

Oh My God - If Murder Was Legal
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHnsajl-kB8
Moi: These are classic. Two thumbs up.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Much of the modern world is explained by one population spike

Worldometers
http://www.worldometers.info

Steve: Good article … yep … Environmental Collapse … that’s the ticket!

Moi: What goes up must come down … the joy of statistical certitude.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

The Population Bomb Has Been Defused
The Earth and humanity will survive as fertility rates fall almost everywhere.

Moi: I'm betting that eight billion people divided into who knows how many self-absorbed tribal mindsets, madly consuming and battling over limited resources, will still manage to work their way into one dystopian nirvana or another.

Steve: Yeah it's amazing how twisted this guy's view is if you scroll down he still says the population is going to come close to 12 billion it's already twice what the planet can sustain for any length of time

Moi: A first draft of something I put together today based on Worldometers:

200 million in Year One Anno Domini
First billion mark reached in 1804 Anno Domini
Second billion 126 years later in 1930 (Dad age 4, Mom age 1)
2.6 billion 23 years later in 1953 (Moi Year One)
Three billion in 1960 (Moi 7 years old)
4 billion in 1974 (Moi 21 years old)
5 billion in 1987 (Moi 34 years old)
6 billion in 1999 (Moi 46 years old)
7 billion in 2011 (Moi 58 years old)
8 billion projected in 2023 (Moi 70 years old, maybe)
9 billion projected in 2037 (Moi 84 years old, likely long gone)
Ten billion projected in 2056 (Moi 103 years old, very likely long gone)

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Oklahoma plans to use new execution method

Steve:  The alarming thing about this … is that they are asserting that if the death penalty is declared Unconstitutional … they’re going to go ahead and do it anyway.

Personally, I’d beg for the Death Penalty vs. being in prison the rest of my life … what’s the fucking point of sitting in a box waiting to die … with shitty food at that.

Moi:  I don't know, given how tired I so often am of the human paradigm, staring at a wall for the rest of my life sounds kind of nice.  Government-sponsored meditation might be the answer.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Evolve or die: Why our human ancestors learned to be social more than 320000 years ago

Steve:  Thank God modern technology affords withdrawing from too much of that socializing … I enjoy a reasonable amount of that …. But when it’s forced do to survival requirements … it sucks …

Moi:  Back then it was probably just a relatively few grunts and hand motions.  No Wikipedia and Shakespeare to fill our heads with trivia and silliness.

* * * *

Response to a video link from Ninos David:

Pounce or Play? Curious Cougar Stalks Canadian Photographer

Moi:  Used to do a lot of backpacking and hiking alone in the mountains.  Wonder how many times I was watched by hungry eyes.  How wonderfully naive I was in the innocence of them youthful years.

* * * *

Back and forth with Ninos David on an article I sent:

The Problem Isn’t Just Trump. It’s Our Ignorant Electorate.

Ninos:  Absolutely not.  Not only there is pervasive ignorance, but a great and dangerous divide in the society.  Perhaps, eight years of Trump will give America a good day of therapeutic reckoning that will sustain it for another century.  Enjoy your coffee.
Moi: I'd take that bet if I was going to be around that long. As far as I see it, the US of A's center stage time as a world power is coming to a close. We are going to be gobbled up by the hungrier and more capable.

Ninos: It always happened that way.

Moi: History is just the play of patterns.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

The issue with millennials isn't narcissism but our depressing culture of mass consumption

Moi: It's a ruthless friggin' world – always has been, always will be – and everybody pretty much has to figure out how they're going to deal with it on their own. Ultimately, nobody can save you but yourself.

Everyone is doomed sooner or later, anyway, and so is the earth, and so is the universe. So the faster anyone can reign in all the dread fired up by their imagination, and live as fully as possible in the present, the higher level of self-actualization they will play out in their existence.

I'm just playing out what's left as quietly and peacefully and minimally as possible. Got no DNA in the bother ahead, so it's just watch and wait for whatever quality-of-life time remains.

An inspired couple night's worth of blugrassy ditties that came out while wandering from group to group with Mikki Larrick at the 2018 California Bluegrass Association (CBA) Spring Campout at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, California. Sent a PDF version to Mikki for use in her songwriting – she calls them hooks – as well as anyone else with whom she cares to share them:

California Bluegrass Association
https://www.cbaweb.org

Facebook: California Bluegrass Association
https://www.facebook.com/californiabluegrass/

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre

Michael J. Holshouser

CBA Spring Campout
Stanislaus County Fairgrounds
Sit back, good friends, hear some random thoughts,
And feel free to use 'em and/or abuse 'em as you like.

The players played afire into the wee-rising hours:
Fiddles 'n banjos 'n guitars 'n mandolins 'n basses 'n more.
And I listened as true and full as true as full in this graying mind allows.

Holding on to nothing sets me straight.
The light in the window is drawing me home.
Hadin’t a clue till fate ran me into you.
Lord, don’t take me yet, I ain’t been paid.
How deep the song is the light of you.

With or without you, I am free, babe.

Life’s a rabbit hole, done left me feeling mean.
Tock me places I never, never should have seen.
Ain’t no rewind button for the shoulda-coulda-woulda.

The rain, it washed me pure and clean.
The whim of fate is the hue of you.
I’m done, this body has tortured me long enough.

Blessed are the meek ain’t my way.

The monster’s in me, Momma, I’m sorry to say.

That girl, she done led me down a hard, hard trail.
The breeze, it felt so good across my suffering cheek.
This jingle’s for you, now get out of my way.
The moon, it woke me, and I was out the door.

What bluegrass done for me, well, it just ain’t right.
The coon was a-running till my dog’s first bite.
Had no clue till she disappeared into the night.

Good thing I didn’t come home, I’d have shot ‘em both.

Bought my girl a ring, and she pawned my soul.

In my eyes, the bluegrass gaze; in my mind, the bluegrass daze.

We danced round the fire till the sun’s first light.

The truth, it ain’t never what it seems.

Missed my calling till one night it found me sitting next to you.

I am the outlaw in my girl’s worst dreams.

Fingers and thumb strum the tune.

The tapping foot draws out the song.

The lies, the lies, will you ever stop spinning them my way?

The mountain trail takes me home.

Pushed her out the hayloft to set myself free.

Woke up to Jack Daniels still stinging my tongue, blurring my mind.

Friday night’s high turned into the Monday morning blues.

Willie Nelson left on the bus last night.

This drifter’s arms will set you free at the morning light.

My momma, she’s the first and last woman for me.

Don’t know why you said goodbye.

Sold my soul again last night.

It was with this song that I met the dawn.

I’m home again, woman, but not for long.

Stupid is stupid, oh say can’t you see.

Girl, I thought you said you’d set me free.
The Rabbit Hole is spiraling me down, down, down again.

How true is true? How false is false? And what’s the lie between?

Can’t you see what you mean to me?

Would have told her if she’d let me stay.

Left the squalor of the city lights for the country bluegrass song.

This old snap-crackle-pop back, it sure ain’t what it used to be.

My favorite old dog, he treed that coon.

The mystery born in you, was born in me, too.

That pearl necklace, it done broke my heart.

The root of life, it runs deep in me.

That rising moon made my dog and me howl for joy.

The preacher’s daughter, what she done to me.

Excuse me, my banjo calls.

The drifter’s song set me free.

Did I just hear another honey-tongue lie?

Won’t you sing that pretty song out loud again.

The different you, the different me, I am you and you are me.

Cry, baby, cry, just don’t say goodbye.

She came to me in a sky-blue cotton dress.

Tell me it ain’t true, and I’ll believe the lie.

That Jack burns my tongue just right tonight.

Damn you, Willie, play on, play on.

How sweet the sound, the stream in me.

The future of time is but a song in my mind.
She made me cry, so I stayed another day.

The last song let my dreams run free.

Jezebel, Jezebel, please, please, leave me alone.

The wandering caravan alit with bluegrass fire travels across the land.

How true the true, how false the false.

Sing that song again for me, my friend.

Higher highs, lower lows, you bring 'em all home, girl.

Whoever said love is forever never met you.

Lead me on, pretty girl, and I will follow like the dog I am.

One, two, three, four, the tune carries the floor.

Reflections, what do they mean?

Every creek a Mississippi traveling to the sea.

Music, it sets me free.

The nomads of bluegrass ride again.

The limb broke, and I died.

Banjo or fiddle or guitar or mandolin, the big brown bass strums along.

That pony don’t care much for me.

The harmonic string finds its chord.

Malarkey met its definition in you.

It’s a cold world, Momma, and I am so alone.

Without you, what would I do?

Just another silly song while the river streams on.

Was it A? Was it D? Can’t remember for the life of me.

Nurse that beer, smoke that song.
Best walk away, girl, don’t ask why.

Country songs, they set me free.

The door opens, the door closes, be sure to watch your toes.

The demon in your eyes makes my blood run cold.

American Apple Pie, it’s done lost its sheen.

Bliss, what was that again?

The glint of sunlight cast me over the rainbow.

Girl, who’s that boy staring at you?

I sing this song because it came to me last night.

The devil’s strumming left me cold.

Walking on water in my dreams.

Sorry, Dan, it ain’t true.

That river, was it a trickle? Was it a flood? I cannot remember.

Dreams asunder pluck my strings.

That twang makes me feel good.

Drifting down the Tuolumne was my destiny.

That banjo, it be too heavy for me.

Honky-tonk girl, don’t say goodbye to me.

Sorrow fills me like the wind does a tree.

Oh, Lord, the world took me away from you.

The peas, they are green; the corn, it is yellow.

The train, it choo-chooed on down the line.

The fiddle played extraordinaire through the dawn’s early light.

That guitar, she taught me her tune.
Pawned my guitar for a ticket out of Memphis.

You say that you love me, but it sure ain’t true. Your kisses leave me colder than a morning dew.

Me and my dogs, we howled at the moon all night.

The sun, the moon, they don’t care.

Your beauty, my beast, what a team we make.

The butler and the maid, they walked up the stairs.

Green eggs, green ham, cooked extra special fine.

The sorrow, it don’t need more rain.

Heaven hath no fury like a born-again shrew scorned.

Thing One, Thing Two, what on earth did you do?

Hello, goodbye, what does that mean?

Them hunting dogs missed the coon sleeping in the log.

Oh, Gabriel, Gabriel, where hast thine horn gone?

Bit off more than I can chew, and the devil, he’s collecting, with interest due.

Daddy told me, “Run, boy, run, hell hath no fury like your mother scorned.”

Walking along the wave-battered shore left me feeling just right.

Tunes, more tunes, and even more tunes, set the night ablaze.

Pass the ham, and then the corn, and then the peas.

The peas, it was passed after the ham and corn.

The moon, it made me howl all night.

Keeping your nose on your own face looks best to me.

Midnight deflection is nothing more than a reflection in my mind.

Bluegrass heaven ain’t for me.
This dog day dummy has his sights set on you.

Dreams follow me home, and you are their queen.

Perish the thought afore it perishes you.

The mountains beckon me home so far away.

How a butterfly set me free.

She left me down and out, and then I met you.

Sleeping alone, it ain’t so bad next to you.

Country boy, take me home.

Country girl, take me home.

Say what you will, home, it be free.

How sweet the blues are to me.

Mountains of smoky blue strike my soul true.

The dream, as long as it is short.

Don’t ask, don’t tell, is the best policy for them who would be free.

That Kentucky moonshine left me feeling mean.

Letting stupid be stupid surely ain’t ever the good Lord’s way.

My girl slammed the door for good last night.

Drifting down the river set my soul free.

The smoky green burns well in my mind tonight.

She held me through the night till the morning light.

I’d have stayed if I’d known you loved me.

You came home before I could leave you.

Today’s headlines are tomorrow’s sorrows.

All your promises were the same lies you told her.
Loyal to all and none, I burned a trail home free.

When you said you loved me, I believed it all true,
But it was a from-the-get-go lie I finally saw through.

Promised you everything, and it was never enough.

Held you close, dear, as close as close allows,
And still you left me all alone, crying and sighing,
Before the morning sunlight through the window streamed.

Yet another face in which vanity will find harbor.

It weren’t me, babe, it weren’t me. I swear my lie through and through.

Left the city for a mountain, and this life, it weren’t ever the same.

Sang it true till I met you.

Left you once, left you twice, third time’s the charm, unless you call me back again.

Un-caged, flying free, remembering again how little I care.

Only you? I don’t think so, kiddo. I’m a dog, a dog through and through.

Believed you when you said it was over, but then the door, it didn’t slam.

You love me, I love you, let’s say it again to prime it true.

Strumming them chords, he’s a bluegrass player.

You knew I was gone before I left.

I knew you were gone before you left.

Ain’t killed nobody today, but not for want of thinking about it.

The twang lingers in my mind, and on paper words flow, and then more again.

Another slice of dream tucks me in its seam.

The sneeze that brought the house down.

The wolf blew and blew and blew, and then, voilà, he was stew.

Went home, passed out, woke up next to you.

Never knew how good a good friend could be, till I became good friends with you.
If leaving was the plan, best it was your idea.

The joke, it wasn’t funny to me, but I guffawed just the same.

If kisses were sand, we’d be lying on a beach.

Stopped coming by so long ago, when you made it clear I’d never be in your show.

Oh, you’re still here? Why? No, don’t answer that. Just let the door hit you at least once on the way out.

If you knew how to read my mind, you’d know I’d told you it was over oh so long ago.

Bet you wouldn’t treat me this way if I was a rich movie star.

Immortal soul, mortal body, forever young playing the gray.

Bad news, good news, it don’t ever feel the same.

Twang, twang, the fiddle sang, the guitar joined in, and then the mandolin.

Say what you will, loving you ain’t no crime.

The morning light found me alone and free again.

Sift through the sand, and you’ll find my mind.

Can’t hear you, and not just because I don’t want to.

Hesitate too long and I’ll be gone.

They say the good die young, so at least I know I won’t ever be as old as you.

Wherever I set this pillow is my home.

I sang your song, now you sing mine.

You’ll find me at the end of the long and winding road, through two gates and a door.

The only thing that makes your being gone better is you thought it was your idea.

The ice cracked, and I died.

So long ago you were handsome and bold, but now you’re just a couch potato leeching my soul.

The players came and went and found each other anew, happily strumming, happily singing, and the crossing moon never even once noticed.
Roses are red, violets are blue,  
I’ll sing a song if you sing one, too.

The happiest rose is the one you never picked.

You said you loved me, but it was just a ploy.  
Now I’m forever ruined, and you think it funny.  
I thought you’d be mine, I believed you’d be true.  
Now you’re just another scar in my bittersweet mind.  
I won’t miss the pain, darling, no, I won’t miss the pain.

Dittyfest, dittyfest, higher and higher and higher upon the dittyfest pyre.

I loved you once, I loved you twice,   
But you said with a kiss it would never be enough,  
And left me for a cherry red pickup  
And my former best friend.

Hadn’t a clue till I met you.

The song ain’t mine, the song ain’t yours;  
It belongs to anyone with an ear for verse.

Wandering here, wandering there, the tunes, the tunes, in every cranny, from every nook.

The difference between you and me is just a thought or two or three.

Alone in their own worlds, the players all play along.

Did I leave you? Did you leave me? Can’t remember, but we’re done-all-done just the same.

Hadn’t heard that one before, but it sounded the same.

The morning lark strums the fiddle in my head.

Half-baked ain’t bad at all.

A Christmas tree is dying to come home with you.

How sad the song that says you left me.

He was a lamb when his wolf weren’t calling.

A tear came, and I was lost again.

The dog howled, the cat yowled,  
And the band played on and on and on,
Until well past the break of dawn.

I left you, you left me, till we came together again under the old oak tree.

Drifting along, my heart has lost its song.

Forgive me, darling, and I’ll be happy again.

“All right!” was the last thing she said.

Lawman, lawman, lock me up or get me home, I’ll be drunk just the same.

So far away, so long ago, the show, the show, it changes so.

I said, “Stop, let me be.”
You said, “But I love you!”
And I cried out, “I just want to be free.”

Notes for you, a community true.

Did I fall in love? Did I fall in lust? The difference ain’t that much.

I thought I left you behind, but you followed me home anyway.

The highway ain’t no Yellow Brick Road,
But it be Oz in the mind a-trucking along.

Heard the call, and ignored it, as I so often manage to do.

You stole my heart, you stole my mind, your kisses, they left me blind.

I said, “Stop, please stop, don’t go, I love you.”
But you slammed the door, drove off with a roar, and I was all alone again.
Grabbed a beer, some chips, turned on the television,
And waited for Kate to stop by.

Mix it up; it ain’t nobody’s song.

Lord, don’t take me yet, I ain’t been laid.

Guess I’ll just stay the same man you left. It’ll probably keep working.

Pieces fall, pieces scatter; rest assured I’m still yours through it all.

Nowhere to go, nothing to be, and no plans to change.
Only birds and fishes and spiders are freer than I.

That weren’t the plan in my head, so I’m moving on. Please resist the urge to follow.
Here tonight, gone tomorrow, enjoy me now in your candlelit nest,
For I’ll be gone before the sun peeks through the garden window.

I left you, darling, so you’d be free.

Time weaves along in me, along in you,
So we sing the song, and believe it true.

This little old heart hadn’t never felt love till I saw your sweet face.

You locked me out like the dog I am.

Told her I’d love her forever, and then never saw her again to prove it.

Drifters drift on, nice guys hang around.

Who wins, who loses, just a state of mind.

The dog sniffed here, the dog sniffed there.
The coon slipped away and lived another day.

Sitting here a-listening, it’s all music to me.
The gift of time ain’t mine to give
But for the attention, the reflection,
I lend your strumming rhyme.

* * * *

Back and forth with Mikki Larrick on a “Checking In” email I sent:

Moi: Haven't heard back from you. Things okay?

Mikki: Sorry! I just got back from 9 days in Grass Valley for the bluegrass Festival. Not much party, a whole lot of work! Orchards are planted and we are babysitting the watering. Everyone is fine, getting the garden back on track. Apricots are getting ready. I should have enough to can. Two kids birthday parties this weekend. Going to be hot. I'll send a few pix. Thanks for checking back.

Moi: Busy-busy! Going to have to take a nap to balance out my universe. Forgot when that bluegrass festival was happening. Probably a few extra daze on both ends for you've since you've joined the management team.

So has my wordy manifesto been of any use to your song-writing efforts?

Mikki: I haven’t had the proper time to go thru them. Brief review shows promise! I’ll let you know!

Moi: No worries, just curious. It was a fun few daze of creativity, and, as always, my first and
foremost audience is always myself. Attached is a cover for it.

Glad things are going well. Keep on keeping on.

Ciao, ciao,

M

Mikki: Cool. Hahaha!

* * * *

Brainstorming response to Chuck Hooper’s “Fifty-Nine Minutes to Great Storytelling” series:

Amazon: Charles E Hooper
https://www.amazon.com/Charles-E-Hooper/e/B01AAXZE84/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_4?qid=1518284755&sr=8-4

FIFTY-NINE MOMENTS

59 Moments to Me, My Self, and I
59 Moments to Truth or Consequences
59 Moments to Diddly-Squat
59 Moments to Okey-Dokey
59 Moments to Eternity
59 Moments to Oblivion
59 Moments to Laissez-Faire
59 Moments to So It Goes
59 Moments to Fearlessness
59 Moments to Timelessness
59 Moments to Truth
59 Moments to Born Anew
59 Moments to Nirvana
59 Moments to Passé
59 Moments to Godlessness
59 Moments to God
59 Moments to Rationalism
59 Moments to Existentialism
59 Moments to Annihilation
59 Moments to Common Sense
59 Moments to Discernment
59 Moments to Critical Thinking
59 Moments to Gumption
59 Moments to Grit
59 Moments to Resourcefulness
59 Moments to Imagination
59 Moments to Inventiveness
59 Moments to Creativity
59 Moments to Wit
59 Moments to Born Again
59 Moments to Ingenuity
59 Moments to Enterprise
59 Moments to Reality
59 Moments to Absurdity
59 Moments to Humility
59 Moments to Hopelessness
59 Moments to Minimalism
59 Moments to Evermore
59 Moments to Hedonism
59 Moments to Discipline
59 Moments to Narcissism
59 Moments to Ecstasy
59 Moments to Heaven
59 Moments to Hell
59 Moments to Buddha
59 Moments to Null and Void
59 Moments to Emptiness
59 Moments to Nothingness
59 Moments to Now
59 Moments to Here
59 Moments to Here Now
59 Moments to Negation
59 Moments to Anarchy
59 Moments to Skepticism
59 Moments to Cynicism
59 Moments to Pessimism
59 Moments to Doubt
59 Moments to Nihilism
59 Moments to Bullshit
59 Moments to Om
59 Moments to Quantum
59 Moments to Abyss
59 Moments to Agnostic
59 Moments to Atheism
59 Moments to Freethinking
59 Moments to Belief
59 Moments to Death
59 Moments to Eternal Life
59 Moments to Nonbelief
59 Moments to Illusion
59 Moments to Delusion
59 Moments to Matrix
59 Moments to Craving
59 Moments to Satisfaction
59 Moments to Contentment
59 Moments to Immortality
59 Moments to Solitude
59 Moments to No Other
59 Moments to Detachment
59 Moments to Singularity
59 Moments to Totality
59 Moments to Absoluteness
59 Moments to Indivisibility
59 Moments to Success
59 Moments to Failure
59 Moments to Happiness
59 Moments to Sorrow
59 Moments to Joy
59 Moments to Oneness
59 Moments to Ecstasy
59 Moments to Infinity
59 Moments to Infinitesimalibility
59 Moments to Peace
59 Moments to Freedom
59 Moments to the Beyond the Pale
59 Moments to Perfection
59 Moments to Imperfection
59 Moments to Tranquility
59 Moments to Bliss
59 Moments to Meditation
59 Moments to Contemplation
59 Moments to Acuteness
59 Moments to Obtuseness
59 Moments to Heaven
59 Moments to Hell
59 Moments to Perdition
59 Moments to Brahman
59 Moments to Samadhi
59 Moments to the End of Time
59 Moments to the Beginning of Time
59 Moments to the Success in Failure
59 Moments to the Failure in Success
59 Moments to Future-Past
59 Moments to Serendipity
59 Moments to Dharma
59 Moments to Artha
59 Moments to Kama
59 Moments to Moksha
59 Moments to Go
59 Moments to Dreamtime
59 Moments to Pause
59 Moments to Stop
59 Moments to Separation
59 Moments to Unity
59 Moments to By Golly
59 Moments to the Great Pfft!
59 Moments to Manifest Destiny
59 Moments to Unmanifest Destiny
59 Moments to the End Before All Beginnings
59 Moments to the Beginning After all Ends
59 Moments … To Be Continued

* * * *
Response to a video link from cousin Steve:

New Rule: Distinction Deniers
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1MZRowhMtc&feature=youtu.be

Moi: The world is many shades of gray. I have a penis, and it has caused me to do many things I might not do again, but I refuse to feel guilty about it. Minnie Driver and the PC collective will just have to deal with it.

* * * *
Response to an email from Bruce Styles on his current health status:

Tough news about your brother, and good news on the back, but that blood pressure is definitely dicey, especially the top number. I'm sure you've caught one of my standard quips more than once: This getting old is getting old. Got a helium tank and sundry firearms at the ready is all I can say. I have no intention of putting up with a bunch of torturous bullshit in dealing with the inevitable. Quality of life is all.

Final Exit
http://finalexitandrelatedlinks.blogspot.com/

And regarding Trump and this world goes, as I've said before, I've pretty much given up on bothering about it anymore. The human race isn't heading any direction I'm interested in watching up close and personal. Too friggin' crazy to think there's anything but more and more horror and absurdity ahead. Not worth getting worked up about at this stage of the game, especially for those of us who haven't cast our DNA into the future dreamtime.

Thanks for the overview on Medicare. I turn 65 in November, but am pretty ignorant about the process at this writing. Someone told me a few daze ago to be sure to get Plan F, so your mentioning A and B and D is another good tidbit.

Two questions:

Should I sign up online, or go live into the Social Security office?

As a former insider to the game, are there any particular insurance providers you would recommend? My mother uses United Health Care, which is what I'll probably lean towards unless I can find something that covers me with low or no payments. If you can offer any good info, let me know.
Good luck with it all, El Dude.

Ciao ciao,

M

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Father lunges at Larry Nassar in court before being restrained

Moi: How is any parent not paying very close attention to any adult who spends a great deal of
time around their children? How is any parent not empowering their children to speak up when
something unacceptable is happening to them? If those were my daughters, you can be sure
Nassar's balls would have been flushed down the toilet a long time ago.

Steve: I'm assuming it was the aura of the mythical Medical professional. Same thing happens
with Catholic priests.

Moi: When it comes to your children, trust no one, especially fucking Catholic
priests. Pedophile, Inc. I call the Vatican anymore.

Steve: But they're messangers of God ... so it must be God's Will ... right?

Moi: What a delusional world … I'm so over us.

Steve: There's a video of a woman stating that its Gods Will that Trump got elected …

Moi: Impling that we and all the other critters are nothing more than mindless chess pieces.

Steve: If this mess is Gods Will ... I'm not impressed.

Moi: Just watched "The Unbelievers" last night. Pretty good. Amazing that rationality is losing
out to absurdity, but oh well.

The Unbelievers
https://dvd.netflix.com/Movie/The-Unbelievers/70293728?trkid=201886046

Steve: Yeah … so much so ... you can go on tour preaching reality.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

In New York, Gun Owners Balk At New Handgun Database
https://www.npr.org/2018/01/31/581879702/in-new-york-gun-owners-balk-at-new-handgun-
database
Steve: People who actually believe that a database like this will tell you anything about under the radar criminals with guns ... are too stupid to be making policy ... and should be automatically removed from office … overnight … and it should be a felony to be that stupid.

Moi: That is one of the big reasons I refuse to be bothered by all these gun laws that Sacramento keeps spewing out. I'm not the guy they have to worry about intentionally hurting anyone, and if they want to waste taxpayer money sending me to jail for having things that were legal when I bought them, then so be it. If something was to happen that puts me behind bars, I'll just look at it as another adventure in my already very shades-of-gray sixty-four years.

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A letter sent to my sister and brother-in-law, Ann and John Christensen, while reinstating my teaching credential with a Cultural Language Acquisition Development (CLAD) Certificate at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, in 1999:

Hey, A & J,

Until your note the other day, I for some reason I thought you were already moving into your new workplace. Didn't realize all the financial prep is still happening. Dad just mentioned something about you having a reorganization bid accepted by a bank. Sounds like "big-time" to me.

When you last wrote you mentioned something about my getting out of teaching because I didn't feel I was a good teacher, which is not the case as I see it. I've always thought I was a good teacher … was so full of pep and enthusiasm in those mid-thirties … brought so many things into the classroom that no one ever did for you or I.

But what I was, after two years in Ojai, was incredibly "world-weary"; a major case of burn-out. Oak Grove had sucked it all out of me. I just didn't have any more energy for artificial school settings. I was bored with teaching, done with idealism and martyrdom, done with Southern California, suffering more pain than I would ever want to deal with again, reading Hindu writings for the first time, exploring hallucinogens for the first time, buying guns and learning how to shoot, doing whatever it suited me to do, and beginning to have an awful lot of thoughts pour out.

In retrospect, a major factor in it all was that my body took a nosedive into an all-time low because of general the wear-and-tear and the cumulative consequences of a variety of work and play-related injuries. In the ten years since leaving Ojai, I've probably spent at least 30 grand out-of-pocket, plus two or three work comp claims. Have spent a good deal of time in waiting rooms and laid up in bed. It is amazing what a person will go through to continue on.

And there were just a bunch of other things I felt drawn to do: Move back to Northern California, write a bunch more aphoristic silliness, buy and shoot more guns, read all kinds of military and strategy books, experiment with even more drugs, work a bunch of different jobs, and spend a whole heck of a lot of time wandering about, sitting at coffee shops chatting with all kinds of people, reading, writing, sitting, watching, thinking, dreaming … doing nothing in particular and everything in general.
Then came carpal tunnel at Kinko's, and here I am … in Arcata … back in school … starting a "new phase" as one former employer called it. Who knows where it will lead this time. Am just sort of wandering as I always have through whatever comes my way … no real agenda … lots of potentials.

It ain't over till that last whispered breath eases out of me.

And that's the way it was … and is … in my view of things, anyway.

Hope you guys blast off. Keep in touch when you've got time.

Take care,

Michael

* * * *

An all-purpose letter sent to a few friends in Chico after moving back to Stanislaus County to work for Creative Alternatives in 2000:

Hey there. Thought I'd let you know what’s up since I last saw you.

It’s been one of those years filled with change, but things are finally stabilizing nicely. Am living in Turlock working for Creative Alternatives, a residential and foster home organization I worked at before going into teaching over a decade ago. Am about three months into playing Administrative Assistant in the foster home program. Started in February as a roving child care worker in the group homes, upgraded to running a classroom at the Reyn Franca special education school in April, and landed the current position a little over three months ago.

After the cool, moist air of Arcata, it was something of a shock returning to the area where we were raised. Hot and smoggy and crowded. The trade-off is that it's been pleasant being closer to family, and interesting connecting with old friends. Going back into places you’ve spent a lot of time in always brings back lots of memories. Feel like I’m traveling in a time machine sometimes.

Am living in a nice little studio apartment practically right next to the office where I'm working. A pleasant little stroll and I'm there.

Spend free timeputtering about, as is my nature. Always seem to come up with plenty of dinkabout projects to keep amused.

Hope all is well. Keep in touch and get in touch with me if you get down this direction.

Take care,

Michael
P.S. Have "The Stillness Before Time" website back up at a different address. Added a bunch of new material in a random push-button design I'm calling "The Matrix." I've designed it so that I can add, delete and change it quite easily. If that sort of thing interests you, see the link in the signature below.

* * * *

After sending Gianni Grassi of Carmel the Ashtavakra Gita links below, he asked: I am curious how scriptures approach you, how you meet them and then how any change occurs.

Wikipedia: Ashtavakra Gita

The Heart of Awareness (Byrom)
http://theheartofawareness.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Marshall)
http://theashtavakra.blogspot.com/

Bitten by the Black Snake (Schoch)
http://bittenbytheblacksnake.blogspot.com/

A Duet of One (Balsekar)
http://aduetofone.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Richards)
http://anotherashtavakragita.blogspot.com/

Astavakra Samhita (Wood)
http://astavakrasamhita.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Vedic)
http://ashtravakrageeta.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita: I Am Shiva
http://ashtavakragitaiamshiva.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita: Sri Ramana Maharshi
www.sriramanamaharshi.org/resource_centre/audio/ashtavakra-gita/

Everything just sort of happenstances into my awareness in a variety of ways as I wander about. Nothing organized about my journey, or what I've written. Very eclectic, very shoot from the hip, very much a chameleon. Have never belonged to any group, never followed any dogma, never sat with any guru. I always say the universe is my teacher. Things just sort of happen. Running into you is an example. I wandered over to Monterey, bought a cup of coffee, and there you were at a nearby table. We talked several times, and I walked away with a few more goodies in my bag of tricks.

And any changes in perception just sort of happen, too. Not sure I can really state there have
been any great flashes of insight, other than to say, if something makes sense, it makes sense, and it gets absorbed into my little play of consciousness, my little dreamtime, and intertwines however it will.

* * * *

Response to a letter from Linda McFelter in Chico after moving back to Turlock to work for Creative Alternatives:

Hey, Linda,

Sorry to hear things aren't going so well for Cliff. Was thinking he had more of a regular thing going with Dan at Chico State, but I guess that didn't work out has he'd hoped. Too bad he never got in with Bill Graham or some other big-time concert outfit. Sometimes our callings are hard to come by.

Hadn't realized Gypsy was in Washington DC. What an experience, I'm sure. I think she's going to have an interesting life. Has quite a head on her shoulders, and has seen and done so much more than many kids her age.

You asked for more details about my work. Am mostly in the foster family side of things at Creative Alternatives, but have a few fingers in the group home and non-public school pies as well.

By "eclectic" I mean: advertising, personnel intake and exit paperwork, first aid/cpr training, foster parent training, client transportation, helping create the intensive therapeutic care program, organizing special events, re-designing forms, updating the web site, newsletters, digital photography, computers, tracking a variety of managerial type things, editing for others, possibly researching grants, general support, input, problem-solving and whatever else needs to happen.

It suits me.

And I have a little corner office with a view. Very nice to have such a job at this point in my life.

A very quiet, pleasant evening at this end. Took a bit of a nap after work, and after eating, went down to the gymkhana horsing events at the County Fair. The actual fair doesn't start till Friday, but they always do the horse stuff (FFA, 4H, English and Western) the week prior. Did the photography for it and the Fair for a couple years, years ago. The people running it are old friends from the early post-college Waterford News era.

After that I came home, sipped a beer out in the patio, wandered across the street to the club jacuzzi, and am back on the patio sipping another beer. Pretty quiet, as I said. The day was on the mild side weather-wise, and right now there's a bit of a breeze, and it's just downright perfecto mundo.

Tomorrow morning it's chiropractor time. The body's a bit tight, but the month-plus of back bother I've been enduring has past (Wallahoo!) Will probably head into Starbuck for a coffee and some work time prior to the appointment at nine. Have to whip together a newsletter by next
week, and haven't been able to focus in the office because so many other projects are pulling me every which way.

Hope all's well enough.

Michael

P.S. Still do string figures once and awhile, but not regularly since I'm out of teaching.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Humanity Officially Started Ruining The Planet In 1965 - Welcome To The Anthropocene Era

Steve: More like 1865 … the Industrial Revolution put us on a path of consuming fossil fuels … wood … then coal … then oil … then gas.

Moi: Yup, the nuclear thing was just another turn in the trail of tears.

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

Boom turns to bust for millennials across advanced economies

Moi: The future is definitely sucky for all them kids swarming in playgrounds across the board. How fortunate we've been to have been boomers.

Steve: I think our parents had it better than us … in the context of living during the high point of the Roman Empire … it’s been down hill since 1970.

Moi: Even though it may not have been the peak of empire, I consider our time to be much better on the whole. They had to get through the Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. I missed Vietnam because I drew 237 for the last draft, and have always managed a critical mind, a full belly, safe harbors, and oodles of adventures they never began to experience. They endured, we frolicked.

Steve: While I agree with the dogging the major wars component … I don’t consider my life full on frolicking … I work constantly and it only pays the bills … our parent were able to buy a house on far less than what it takes us to do so.

The ratio of an engineers pay in Silicon Valley … to the cost of a house … in our parents time was 2:1 … it is now over between 10:1 to 15:1.

My mother told me that during the 50s and 60s … if you had a job you could buy a house … it
was cheaper than renting … those days are gone … and the quality of life was much better due to the population being far less.

When my parents moved to the Bay Area … there were only 1 million people … 1.5 when I was born … and now it’s over 8 … and they say it will be 10 by 2020.

The petri dish is full.

Moi: My view comes from being more observer-philosopher than participant in the rat race. Have never had much ambition for this world. Lived in the Bay Area a couple times – Alameda in the mid-70's and Los Gatos in the early 80's – but most my existence has been spent in the Central Valley – Stanislaus County, Sacramento, and Chico, with brief spurts in Reno, Ojai, and Arcata – which has also grown way too crowded for my taste, but not nearly as much as your turf. I can hardly stand going that direction anymore. Way too overwhelming to bother through.

Steve: I can see that in people who visit the Bay Area … from less populated areas. When Becky comes out to visit from the boonies in Michigan … she gets stressed out just driving down the street. She lives on what amounts to farm country … and I think we in this area are all stressed … for so long … we don’t realize how it’s impacting us until it reaches a critical fracture.

I need to get out of there as soon as possible … or at least shut down work and commuting … but I’ve got another 5 years by my calculation.

Moi: I'll definitely be looking to move north when Mom passes, something with fewer people, less heat, more water, cleaner air. Eugene, Fort Bragg, Arcata, and Crescent City are all on the possibilities list. Depends whether I want to go coastal or stay in valley mode.

Steve: And somewhere that’s not a target for Nukes.

Moi: Or right in the bulls eye so as not to have to endure the daze after.

Steve: I would imagine it would be best ... over quick ... wonder if you'd feel anything?

Moi: I suspect not. Probably one of the more efficient means to get out of here. Instant burnt toast. Go directly to ashes. Do not pass Go. Do not collect $200.

Steve: Well at least you save the cost of being cremated.


Steve: What did that cost?

Moi: Something in the neighborhood of $1700 a few years back. Includes getting the ashes dumped around Angel Island. Both Mom and I signed up. Not sure what Ann and John have planned, but pretty sure they'll be doing something in the same vein.
Neptune Society of Central California
http://www.neptunecremation.com/index.shtml

* * * *

Response to an article from Ninos David:

Study By MIT Economist: U.S. Has Regressed To A Third-World Nation For Most Of Its Citizens
https://www.themaven.net/theintellectualist/news/study-by-mit-economist-u-s-has-regressed-to-a-third-world-nation-for-most-of-its-citizens-Sb5A5HZ1rUiXavZapos30g

Moi: The one-percenters and their minions are in charge, always have been, always will be, in the so it goes of the rise and fall of humankind.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

This is what your smartphone is doing to your brain – and it isn't good

Moi: Is there really anything about the world since the advent of agriculture that we were meant to do? Being an anonymous part of a small nomadic hunter-gatherer tribe sound pretty good sometimes.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Why You Should Choose a Pagan Diet
https://experiencelife.com/article/mark-hyman-peganism/

Moi: Alas that all things we shouldn't eat are so tasty and mind-altering. So it goes.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article he sent:

In Winston Churchill, Hollywood rewards a mass murderer

Steve: Interesting how dramatization of historical figures paints very different images. If Germany had won World War II Hitler would have been documented in the history books as being a great leader and savior of his country and Europe. Essentially this article is written from the Viewpoint of an Indian Who's country was subjugated and brutally manipulated by the British for decades but you see the movie today written from the Western perspective and he's portrayed as a fearless leader and a hero.
Moi: I suspect leaders across the world through all time would be classified as war criminals if they were on the losing side. Certainly Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld would be high on my list if I was from the Middle East.

Google Search: Winston Churchill, War Criminal
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&ei=VhykWqvGM8q8jwOd6JIo&q=Winston+Churchill%2C+War+Criminal&gs_l=psy-ab.3...102349.109262.0.109710.13.13.0.0.0.0.303.1514.2j8j0j1.11.0....0...1.64.psy-ab..2.4.706...0j0i131k1j0i22i30k1.0.2GMwOiRB48w

Top Ten American War Criminals Living Freely Today
www.rense.com/general69/tpten.htm

United States War Crimes
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_war_crimes

Google Search: American War Criminals
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&ei=yymkWorsMYrmjwOq2YPACw&q=American+War+Criminals&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i7i30k1j0i13l0j2.103739.105496.0.108634.9.9.0.0.0.0.225.1281.1j6j1.8.0....0...1.64.psy-ab..2.7.1187...0i7i10i30k1j0i8i7i30k1j0i13k1.0.vkHmYtkgsaw

Steve: Alternative facts.

Moi: It's all relative. Mainly depends who holds the winning club. Losers and dead folks don't get much chance to hold trials or write history books. Despite our inexhaustible self-promotion, we aren't the good guys.

Eduardo Galeano

Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1568586124/ref=oh_aui_search_detailpage?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Amazon: Eduardo Galeano
https://www.amazon.com/Eduardo-Galeano/e/B000AP701M/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1

Steve: Agreed … that was my point about Churchill … whoever wins writes the history books … our heroes are someone else’s war criminals.

I’ve come to the conclusion there are no good guys … only people who vilify those above them … until they become one of the wealthy … then they vilified the poor.

All of the Democrats that were vilifying Trump … are at the same time … jumping for joy that they 401Ks are going through the roof … when the reason for that … is that they’ve sold out the future of their children … my sister Barbie is among them … she hates Trump … viscerally … but is gleeful that her retirement funds are going up … even though it is at the cost of the future
of her kids and grandkids ... her children will be paying for that bump she’s got ... for the rest of their lives ... long after she is dead and gone.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Why It’s No Longer Possible for Any Country to Win a War

Moi: Good one. Let us hope it's true, at least for what remains of our diminishing window of time.

* * * *

Response to a letter from Mikki Larrick, a friend from the Waterford years:

Hey, Mikki,

Yes, I got the snail mail, but hadn't responded yet because it got mixed up with some other stuff for a few days. Just found it again last night.

Yes, I remember well the journey north and the Portuguese diesel. We've got a lot of good memories together. All the horse rides, Greeley Hill, walks along the canal bank, photography expeditions, times with your family ... it was a great time in my life.

The spiritual thing is a constant for me. It has been like wine gradually aging my whole adult life. Am always flipping into awareness of the mystery we play out. Have almost 1700 pages of aphorisms transcribed in my computer, and another twenty or so notebooks waiting, waiting.

Created a web site for the original work, "The Stillness Before Time," while at Humboldt State, and just put it up at a new dot-com address in the box below.

Have stopped by the horse show a couple times. Ran into your clan, of course, and will probably go down Sunday afternoon to watch the branding competition.

Was hoping you'd be coming down, but looks like not. Be sure to let me know when you do.

Take care,

Michael

* * * *

A 1979 memory of a cattle branding with the Johnny and Betty Roen clan of Waterford written in 2001:

THE GATHERING
It was long ago, and how they had come to be there, I cannot clearly recall. Perhaps we had gathered them that morning in the surrounding foothills, or maybe they had been collected the day before. But somehow a small herd of mothers and their children had been gathered and placed in a holding pen. They were nervously making the sounds cows make as they milled about in their temporary lock-up.

The holding pen was connected to a smaller corral. We had all collected there for the past hour or so, and were waiting to begin. It was a moderate group of men, women and children of all ages. The men in cowboy hats and spurs, some on horses some on foot. The women in trim blouses and tight jeans.

The area outside the fenced area was littered with pickup trucks and horse trailers. There was a relaxed festivity in the air. These were all friends, and this was a gathering, an annual tradition in their world.

At some signal I did not see, several men on horses entered the holding pen and began with sure, regulated precision to separate the children from the mothers. The nervousness erupted into panic as the separated couples began to bawl their fear.

Without much ado, there were now two groups. The mothers were driven to an area further away, and held at bay by the men on horses. The calves were driven toward the entrance of the main corral, their panic increasing, though they were as yet unaware of the horror awaiting them this day.

Within the pen, men both on horses and on foot were patiently waiting for their entry. In a smoking fire pit in the corner of the corral were a handful of metal brands turning a bright reddish-orange in the coals. A variety of other tools, including knives, needles and medicine bottles were laid out on a small bench nearby.

Outside the corral the women and on-lookers along the fenceline gossiped about their lives and each other. The children watched or played nearby. There was earnestness punctuated by occasional laughter. After a bit they would begin preparing lunch, which would be served on the tailgates of several pickups.

As soon as all the bawling calves were in the pen, the morning’s work began. In some sort of unspoken, tacit agreement understood by men who had done this all their lives, the two cowboys on horseback picked out their first mark. A lasso twirled in the air. The lead cowboy aimed for the head, and after a try or two, had the creature by the neck. The other cowboy now whirled away, aiming for both rear feet, though one would do.

At that, the two horses began backing up as they had been trained, the ropes wrapped around the saddlehorns, pulling the bawling creature into a defenseless position. The ground crew now rushed in, and using twists, pulls and pushes, wrestled it down on its side, and sat on it in such a way that it was completely immobilized. The man at the head pulled the noose off the neck and put it on the front legs.

At this, the cowboys signaled their mounts to back up until the heifer was stretched out into as vulnerable a position as any four-legged creature could ever imagine. What was before a
frightened bawl, now became a piercing scream of absolute terror. The other calves in the corner shared the fear with their own cries.

Now, as the cowboys and horses held their position, other members of the ground crew, including me, quickly headed from the corner with the point of this day. A needle or two filled with various immunizations were quickly, one might say unceremoniously, jammed into the haunch. A red-hot brand, whoever’s these calves belonged to, was held for several seconds against the rump as the hair and flesh sizzled, popped and smoked. The stench of the burning wafted throughout the corral.

If the young calf was so unfortunate as to be male, the next minute made the first a walk in the field. Its horns were clipped with some device akin to bolt cutters, and to stop the gushing blood, another glowing metal rod pushed harshly into the head to cauterized the wound.

And then the most ignoble act any male can ever imagine, a ground worker’s hand grabbed its maleness, and with only the briefest pause, used a sharp blade to slice off the testicle sack, irrevocably changing the creature’s destiny to that of a steer whose future was to play out as a slab of meat in one grocery store or another. The sack was unceremoniously tossed onto the ground for the dogs, and the testicles into a bucket near the branding iron pit.

For the remainder of the morning, this scene played out over and over again in the dusty pen, How many calves were branded on that day, I cannot be sure. Perhaps over fifty; perhaps as many as a hundred. Cowboys took turns on both horseback and as ground crew. There was, of course, a sense of friendly competition to see who was most proficient with their horses and lassos, and who could wrestle down the creatures with the least effort. There was laughter and joking throughout the earnestness of the work. At no point can I recall anyone even noticing the terror of their victims.

We broke for lunch at noon. Sandwiches, chips and whiskey, and the delicacy we had all that morning worked to harvest, fried and seasoned as tasty as anything I’ve ever eaten. Mountain oysters some call them. With the screaming still ringing in my ears, I ate several.

It was a harvest celebration of sorts, shared by friends as the came together to help each other accomplish the annual deed in the hills and fields wherever they had cattle grazing. These men and women had spent their lives doing this. It was as normal a rite as harvesting peaches and walnuts had been for me on a small farm a different universe only fifteen miles away. Their horse was my tractor. They graded the calves in the pen as I had peaches in the field. They ate dust and poured sweat as ranchers no differently than I had as a farmer’s son.

And yet, in all my youthful work I had never once heard a scream, nor inflicted pain upon another life form in quite that way. Yes, I had BB-gunned birds, gigged frogs and fish, terrorized cats, wrestled dogs, and squashed insects as any boy might. But somehow that day was as indelible for me as anything I have ever witnessed. It may well have continued into my dreams for several days, and though the details have faded, as all details do in time’s passing, I have never forgotten the essential horror I had for the first time witnessed.

A year later, about the same time but a different location, I joined my friends for another branding. And that day, and on all since, I too, did not hear the screams.
Response to a letter from high school friend Tom Carson:

Tom,

Sounds like all is going pretty well for you and yours.

So you're up in Davis. Do you ever run into Bruce in Sacramento? Had lunch several months ago on one of his Stan State days. Visited Warren when Dave and Carol were in town. Ran into Cathy and Nick at Barnes & Noble. It's been interesting seeing people over time now that I'm back in the area. So many tangents we've all taken.

You asked what I've been doing, and I realize I'm not sure exactly when I last saw you. Figure it must have been in the time period when I left Creative Alternatives in the mid-80's to get a teaching credential. After a summer at UOP, I interned teaching a 5th grade at Hughson Elementary and subbed the next year. Moved down to Ojai to teach 5th/6th at Oak Grove School, a private school started by Krishnamurti, a philosopher I whose work influenced my thinking in the post-college era.

After a couple years in Ojai, I realized I was running on empty as a teacher. After a stint as a morning bread baker in Ojai, I moved up to Chico where I spent the 90's in a variety of jobs including sales, stock and custodial work at a downtown office supply business, partnering up with another fellow in an almost-successful attempt at starting a head-injury residential care business, fixing ATM's and deposit pulls for Wells Fargo Armored, working graveyard production line and then Express Area at Kinko's, and a little part-time barista work at Starbucks on the side. Even drove a taxi through the nights for six months or so.

Got myself a sobering case of carpal tunnel at Kinko's, and after a year on disability, Work Comp Rehab sent me over to Humboldt State for a semester to dust off the teaching credential with a CLAD Certificate. Wasn't sure what I'd be doing next. Was just waiting for the wind to gust one direction or another. Thought it might even be teaching English in Asia, but hadn't really come up with a definite plan.

When I came to see the parents the Xmas of '99, I called up Blane Franca to get together for a drink. We had become good friends running the Foster Family Agency during the CA years. He's now Executive Director, and though it hadn't even occurred to me to come back to CA, he offered me a job. Thought it would be nice to be closer to the parents and said yes. After some time in the group homes and teaching special education at the non-public school in Denair, I'm now back in the Foster Family Agency multi-tasking away administratively in a corner office with a view.

Life is rather strange, Tom. Though I never would have dreamt it back in high school, it's ended up that I've lived a very haphazard, exploratory life. Lots of people, lots of jobs, lots of travels, lots of thoughts, lots of experiences most people don't ever contemplate, much less do.
Don't know if you'll find it interesting, but I've also put together a little philosophical work, mostly aphoristic, that should be coming out on a website in a couple weeks: www.thestillnessbeforetime.com.

So that's it in a nutshell. Not the life anyone might have expected of a little old farm boy coming out of a dusty, small town in rural California, but it's certainly been interesting.

Hope to run into you sometime.

Take care,

Michael

* * * *

A Poem For Michael

His goals are few,
with no worries to pursue.
A life well-stirred,
as variety is to stew.
Branching from his native view,
He's learned a thing or two:
How to handle a machine that spews,
Managing a newspaper crew,
How a lens can capture you,
Writing philosophy of the zoo,
Even joined a staff or two,
To teach others what to do.
Now he speaks with a clue,
Of how he's gained his world-view.
There's nothing left to misconstrue,
He's living life impromptu!

Rhonda Allen, 2002

* * * *

A letter of inquiry about getting The Stillness Before time published:

Michael J. Holshouser
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto, CA 95355-5213
(209) 668-5732 (H) 634-9736 (W)
mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

Editorial Department
Workman Publishing
708 Broadway
New York, NY 10003
June 14, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is a work written several years back. You might find some aphorisms suitable for “The Little Zen Calendar” or another of a similar nature.

There is a great deal of additional material as well.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Holshouser

P.S. No need to return it if you are not interested.

* * * *

Response to an email from Barney Barbour of Chico:

Hey, Barney,

Happened to go into my Hotmail account and discovered your latest note. Don't often check that realm anymore, so you might want to just use the work one (mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org).

So you wanted to hear from me instead of all the little email forwards. Count your blessings that I just send on the more interesting stuff.

Well, what is happening is not much, really. This life seems to be running on the edge of an unassailable monotony. Do lots of different things, but at this point in life, they’ve all been done far too many times before in one form or another. I think if you were to mesh the three lead characters in Hermann Hesse’s Siddhartha, Narcissus and Goldmund, and Steppenwolf, and Albert Camus’s The Stranger, you’d have a pretty good idea what it’s like to be me.

Have actually had a pretty fair year, though. Work is tolerable, though not as interesting as it was in the early days. Routine has always been my challenge, so I’m pretending enthusiasm best I can. At this in point in life, the money and benefits is worth the trade-off. Have had too many adventures in this life to remember anyway.

To be rich or dead, that is the question. Too rich to be bothered, or too dead to care.

Took several quick trips this year: Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Monterey, and a couple to Chico. A long one in November was a week down Highway One from Carmel to North Los Angeles. Very pleasant. One of the nice things about being down this hellish Central Valley zone is its two hour access to both the coast and the Sierras.

Just got the annual exam, and most the numbers are hanging in there. This 48-year-old body’s holding up nicely compared it to what many of peers have going on. The liver numbers,
however, are a bit high, so the doctor is having me come in for a hepatitis panel. Who knows, might be in your boat before long.

Shannon came down the other day for a quick, pleasant visit. Definitely the most comfortable woman I’ve ever hung with.

What else do I do with my time? Putter and wander. Sit in coffee shops (we now have a Starbucks just down the street), watch three or four movies at a time in the local multiplexes, read books and magazines both real and fictional (with increasing difficulty telling the difference), write and transcribe my silliness (yes, it still dribbles out in it’s own fashion), work out at home and gym on a pretty two to three times a week, wander the retail world (for things I don’t really need), clean the apartment (and finally throw out stuff I never really needed), chatter occasionally with strangers and friends (often times preferring the company of strangers), see the parents every week or two, go out drinking sometimes with a few of the buddies at work (see liver concerns above).

Only thirty years to go barring an unexpected visit from Joe Black.

Take care,

Michael

* * * *

A Letter to the Editor to Time Magazine:

HARSH REALITY

After a lifetime watching countless “special reports” of idealistic yada-yada about “How to Save the Earth” (August 26, 2002), all I see anymore is more forests being cut down to sell advertising and keep college-educated yuppies employed.

The down and dirty harsh reality is that we as a species are never going to voluntarily turn around the cataclysm toward which we are madly racing. Technology cannot forever fend off the statistical reality that with every rise must come a fall.

All the “problems” we face boil down to one fact: there are too many human beings on this planet breeding and consuming as mindlessly as fruit flies. Unless there is a major die-back of five to six billion, one Easter Island scenario or another will be this planet’s fate.

Every garden needs a pruning, and ours is long overdue. Whether through environmental collapse; a meteor from the abyss of space; a tiny predator out of the jungles of Africa; or some sort of final solution by a religious zealot, a rogue state, or an MIT lab tech, the human population needs to be drastically reduced if the diversity of this planet is to survive.

Meanwhile, keep spinning the ‘we can save the earth” fantasy as much as you please. Useless as it is, regurgitation of the same-old-same-old sells papers, pays for the SUV’s, and may even get that future lab tech into MIT. Just don’t expect everyone to buy into the delusion.
Moi: All's well enough in the so-it-goes at this end ... Still drinking coffee and JD, writing my babble, catching what zzz's I can, watching our Brave New World spin down the craps table ... I've been backing away from social media and other online time more and more ... The human paradigm only makes me weary anymore ... Getting back to old school, the analog world, whenever possible ... Spend a fair amount of time at Club Brenda right across the street from Studio 101, keeping this life-torn cadaver in the game as best as possible ... Mom is doing very well in her 88th year; spend quality time with her at least once a week ... Ann and John are also hanging in there ... How about you and Carol up there in Lincoln Town?

David: Howdy doo, Mr. Holshouser. I see we're getting off to a cheerful start in 2018. Things are going pretty well, actually. Plenty to keep us busy. Too much time on the internet is making me a bit crazy. Other than that, good. Skimmed through that just now, will read it more thoroughly later. Seems compelling at first look. I know I'm addicted to that dopamine loop; psychologically. FB gives you the illusion of being connected, of maybe even influencing things.

Cher, Sounds like you're still going as strong and enthusiastically as ever. Was thinking you'd left Tri-Counties several years ago to follow your star, but maybe I'm just lost in time as per usual anymore.

Haven't thought about enneagrams for years. Had a girlfriend back in Ojai in the late 80's who was into them. I believe she had me pegged as a nine; just looked it up online, and it seems to fit. She'd lived in a Gurdjieff community at some point, and was pretty well-versed in a variety of spiritual arenas.

So, with a birth date of November 14, 1953 ... in horoscope lingo, I'm a Scorpio ... in tarot, I'm a Charioteer ... in whatever you call the Chinese model, I believe I'm a Water Snake. Am not sure about any other such systems inspired by time and space, but they all add to the amusement inspired by this label or that.

No, I haven't read Tolle's "A New Earth" yet, and I'm kind of doubtful I'll ever more than browse it. Reading the jacket summary online, I'm thinking he's not really saying anything I haven't already read or written who knows how many times. And, frankly, I don't really feel the need to read all that much anymore. Once and a while I'll pick up one of my favorites, or peruse a few
books while at a book store. But these days, a good walk, a cup of stained water, some sitting time, and a bit of puttering about, is about all that's required. Whatever ambition I may have once had, not that there was ever much, has, I'm afraid, long since dissolved. I may be a light, but I'm evolving – or devolving – into some sort of manana-enjoy-a-nap-on-the-grass mode.

As far as humanity awakening in our lifetime, I'm not at all that confident that our kind as a whole will ever wake up to an enlightened paradigm. Too many people, too much self-absorption, too much delusion, too much ignorance, too much attachment to the mind-made concoctions of time, too much everything, and not enough resources (i.e., oil) or time (i.e., global warming) to pull it together anytime soon, if ever. Individually, yes, there will perhaps be a fair number who discern the bigger picture, but six, seven, eight billion all at the same time? Highly improbable. I'll be happy to be wrong, but the leading indicators in this field of vision are not pointing in an optimistic direction. Call me Eyeor, I suppose, but, oh well.

Anywho, enough of my cynical, dark flavoring. It's good to hear from you! I'm glad you're doing well. I've always appreciated your boundless energy and good intentions. Good luck with your transformative work. And keep in touch.

Ciao,

Michael

-----

Cher,

Buenos good morning!

Oh, I don't know if I'm all that present all the time, either. It is, indeed, more than a little challenging to be in the world and not of it. But the "work" is staying present, and I give my self over to that which cannot be named whenever the thought comes to mind. Depends, I suppose, how distracting the noise of the world is in any given moment. So, do not think me as free as my chatter might both wish and pretend.

More on the humanity's potential paradigm shift: My view is that the change in consciousness of which we're speaking requires a world-wide disaster of biblical proportion. This "Great Fall" as I've come to think of it, is the tsunami of all the things we as a species have wrought, including over-population, mass extinction, global warming, pollution, resource depletion, all the divisiveness of mind, et cetera ad infinitum. In my vision, we are obviously in the early stages of this coming avalanche, and I think it will accelerate into full collapse for the remainder of this century.

I believe that if there's to be a mass wake-up, it will only come after we hit the wall, and only by those who are able to re-formulate a healing, right-relationship with nature. I just don't see a paradigm shift happening until everything we have created up to now is ripped from our self-absorbed little fingers. And even then, given my observations of humanity across the board, I'm doubtful enlightenment will ever fully reign. Superstition, tradition, general ignorance, lack of discipline, and just plain foolishness, are just too powerful for most minds to discern, much less overcome.
The challenge for those of us who would entertain a more enlightened world, is to individually, indivisibly play out our own process, and to continue doing what we can to help others who come into our sphere of influence awaken as they are able, and then to witness whatever unfolds with a certain air of detachment.

But, my cynicism notwithstanding, I will, as I said previously, be more than happy for your optimistic prediction to be right, and mine to be wrong.

One of my favorite quotes is by Ambrose Bierce from his work "The Devil's Dictionary" is the "Definition of a cynic: A black-guard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be."

So, enough of my silliness, where are you living these days? Still in Redding? I've pretty much let go of anything past friendship. How's your love life?

Ciao,

Michael

PS  I like the word "incinerate," and good old Ram Dass re: parents is right on once again.

* * * *

Response to a letter from Selena Mitchell Quan of Chico:

Selena,

Gosh, 15 years, so many adventures. Not sure exactly what was going on when you graduated and left town. What year was that, anyway? Somewhere 93-ish? Am thinking I was still taking care of Hugh, the head-injured fellow. Such a fog of memories. Lost in time, I am, I am. Well, that whole attempt to start a head injury residential care business kind of fell apart, after which I did a variety of odds and ends things before getting out of Dodge 1999-ish.

The main sources of income from ‘93 or so included ATM tech for Wells Fargo Armored, taxi driver for Eagle Taxi, part-time barista at Starbucks, selling Corian cutting boards at craft fairs for Meraz & Associates, and key-op and express coordinator at Kinko’s. Also fixed up for some old friends what had deteriorated from Grandma’s one-bedroom cottage on Oleander Avenue into a pretty battered drug hovel. Slowly brought it back to life, and had some interesting times in the five or so years I spent there. All very blurry and mixed as to the what-happened-exactly-when, but a good stage for many adventures, nonetheless. Like I said, lost in time.

In 1998, I developed carpal tunnel syndrome at Kinko’s, and used the rehab opportunity to leave Chico and go over to Humboldt State for most of ‘99 to brush off a teaching credential with a CLAD certificate. Through the usual serendipity that runs this existence, I came back in early Y2K to the home area near Modesto to be near my parents and work for Creative Alternatives (http://www.creative-alternatives.org/), a homegrown group home/foster family/nonpublic school outfit I’d spent a couple years with during the mid-80’s. Am currently at Reyn Franca School, a K-12 special education school for emotionally/behaviorally disturbed kids the public
schools can’t handle. The job description at this writing includes transportation, company-wide training, and jack-of-all-trades support of whatever needs happening. Something of an insane asylum to be sure. Very crazy what’s up and coming, but I guess it’s what they call job security.

So, anywho, it’s a fairly low-key existence at this writing. Will be turning fifty-five in November. Still a solo act despite a few attempts at relationship here and there through the years. At this point, I’ve pretty much finally realized it just ain’t my cup of tea. I’m just too content to hang out with a cup of stained water and a book, mixed in with long, wandering saunters whenever possible. Live in a studio apartment a block south of Stanislaus State in Turlock, within easy walking access to most of the necessities of modern living. Guess the inherent frugal nature inspired by being raised in a rural setting without much money by parents and grandparents who endured World Wars I & II and the Great Depression fits in nicely with the latest carbon footprint craze.

Still writing, of course. Ye old aphoristic silliness keeps on bubbling away, oftentimes almost camera ready. Over 2650 pages transcribed from all those notebooks and scraps of paper onto which I’ve been scribbling for the last nearly 20 years. An undated journal of random thoughts about anything that came to mind through all the whatever. Nothing that’s setting the world on fire, of course, but an amusing, effortless inclination that’s held up to the test of time when most other things fell to the side. Don’t know that you have time or interest, but a downloadable copy of “The Stillness Before Time” and a link to a blog titled “The Return to Wonder” is online at a website that I put together while attending Humboldt: http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/, Along with a longer booklist and more movies, there are a few things that were written after your departure that you might enjoy.

Anywho, that’s enough about the life and times of Michael for now. What’s your story!? All I think I know is that you and Doug headed back to San Francisco, got married, and voila, evidently split up but still keep in touch, and there you are in Fresno with a different last name, and an unanticipated but I suppose not unsurprising occupation. Inquiring mind want to know.

Ciao,

Michael

P.S. Was that contact info on Brian Cohen of any help to Doug?

* * * *

Back and forth with high school friend Esther Osborne that began with her comment: I know that you sense my "madness,” do you suppose others do? I try to hide it, but it comes out once in a while.

Moi: I don't think comes off that bad. Just a zero-tolerance for bullshit, which I think is par for the course for having survived the world to the ripening old age of "fifty-four, thank god there ain't much more." We’ve both been through a lot in our own way, and some things just get more than a little tiring.

Esther: Yes, my patience is just about played out. Sometimes, I feel like I can't breathe and have to force my self to breathe with big sighs. You amaze me with your intelligence, insight,
and observation abilities. I have difficulties with people that have little thought process and are able to get through life caring about who wins a damn ball game, who is who in entertainment, or to me is just trivial shit. Maybe, I'm just jealous because I'm unable to do that, or that I'm not able to relate to those people.

Moi: Oh, I don't know that I'm always as patient as you might think. Believe me, I can rage as well as you. You only see me at Geerbucks after I've done my hot bath, deep breathing, and whatever other tools of detachment that I can muster to take on the world yet another day. Also, in my wanderings far and wide, I have mastered the zen poker face, which has stood me well many a time. And I gotta say, other than in a cursory way, I'm not all that interested in the silliness so many people think is important. I just sort of watch this inane world in wonder most of the time. People like us are just aliens here, and, I suppose, just need to relax and enjoy the show as best we may. Take more long walks, sit alone, let go of the silliness, enjoy the things that matter to you, discover the infinity within.

Esther: Well said. I'm just trying to figure out the relax part. I've been surrounded by so much family for so many years that I have difficulties being alone. Do you ever feel lonely?

Moi: Okay, you asked for it. I'm going to wax philosophical; do my mystical vision thing. Forgive me if I'm overstepping my bounds, but this sort of thing is what my life is really about. Big difference between lonely and alone. The reality is, in my view of things, that we are all very much on our own from beginning to end. Whether alone or in a crowd, we are each in our own little bubble of awareness through which our individual consciousnesses play out. What we're typically taught to do in our part of the world is avoid looking at it, even to run from it, to keep busy gathering things, or achieving this or that. To make ourselves dependent on others for our happiness. I think we are sort of taught, even encouraged to feel lonely. In other parts of the world, people are taught to examine their inward nature through techniques like meditation, yoga, martial arts, and the like. However you approach it, essentially what you're doing is observing your mind, your body, your senses, your version of the world, whatever it may be. Eventually, if you're fairly observant, if you're fairly earnest, if you're fairly detached, you may even learn to embrace the infinity, the totality, the clayness of which we are all equally created.

Eventually, if you're fairly observant, if you're fairly earnest, if you're fairly detached, you may even learn to embrace the infinity, the totality, the clayness of which we are all equally created. There is nothing that is truly separate. We are all connected at the fundamental, essential, holographic, matrix, quantum level. We are all of the same oneness, the same singularity – which is the aloneness, the source of all creation. In other words, we all very much alone, together. The most simple thing in the world to see, but probably the most challenging, arduous journey anyone can ever undertake. So, do I feel lonely? No, I don't think so. Not like when I was younger. I enjoy being around people, but I also very much enjoy wandering here and there alone. I think, as unlikely as it is to ever happen, that if I was never to see another human being for the rest of my life, that I would do just fine. So, I don't know if that helps, but it's the best I can offer up.

* * * *

Back and forth with former Chico girlfriend Shannon Rooney:

Hey there,

Well, I generally haven't been into all this online stuff. I have enough computer time at work, and with transcribing all my philosophical banter. Fiddled briefly with social networking a few
years ago on MySpace, but then got bored with chatting with people I’ll never meet, and deleted it sometime back. But, at your prompting, I’ve just upgraded the Facebook page for friend and family viewing. Not interested in it being open to strangers, so you and two others should be the only viewers at this writing. I think I’ve got the walls and moats in good order, and will just tinker on it, and invite in people I know in real-time as the mood strikes. I guess, on the whole, I just prefer the real three-dimensional virtual reality. A walk, a drive, time at the gym, writing my philosophical silliness, puttering with all my other little hobbies and interests, chatting with friends and acquaintances at coffee shops, watching a bit of everything through Netflix – are far more enjoyable to me. Will probably be adding family photos that I’ve been gradually scanning, one of my many projects, so stay tuned if you want to see the family, friends, Dad’s artwork, and other silliness gradually appear.

What a drag that CCTC want to create more bother for you, but that’s what happens when we play with fire.

And, yes, happiness that Obama will get his chance to save our world. I’m also an absentee voter; have been for many years, so I cast my ballot several weeks ago. Not expecting him to be able to accomplish much, given the nature of the world, but at least he’s intelligent, articulate, pragmatic, and, as far as my awareness of politics goes, grasps a larger view than any leader we have in our lifetime seen. Interesting times, in the curse sort of way, that’s for sure. As far as I’m concerned, the human drama has passed through the apex of its potential, and the decline of our species, whether quickly or slowly, is underway. Certainly, our portion of the world is undergoing a major metamorphosis as the new generation comes of age. With all the tsunamis of our creation surging towards us in time, I think the middle class will begin a rapid decline as the stresses of overpopulation, the battle for resources, and our innumerable imaginary differences, come to a head. John may call it negative thinking, as you say, but reality has a way of ignoring wishful, hopeful, idealistic thinking. So batten down the hatches, watch your back, and enjoy the show as best ye may.

Ciao for now,

Michael

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Hey there,

Interesting, but I’m never sure how seriously to take all these conspiracy theories. And the trouble with the lizard-brainers behind the veil, is that they and their descendants will ultimately pay the same price as the bottom-feeders. And if we as a species can’t pull it together, and we are obviously not, then, so be it and oh well. You and me, we got ours. We’ve walked many forests, sat by who knows how many rivers, swam in an ocean or two, and had the opportunity to participate at a level of existence that no generation heretofore ever has, nor will relatively few hence ever again. Those who survive, if mammalian life doe survive itself, will both despise and envy what our time has had, and spent. And as one person said to me recently, “Could it have been any different?” So, enjoy the day as best ye may.

Ciao,
Michael

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Shannon,

It is all so silly anymore. Every morning I wake up, put on my game face, and just putter away as I always have. We've all got to do something to get through the day-to-day, and, whether deep or shallow, everyone has what calls them. Will probably continue this existence for as long as I feel like enduring whatever pain the body has in store, but other than getting through it as reasonably as possible, I have no agenda worth a tinker's damn.

As far as putting pen to paper goes, I don't consider myself a great writer by any means, and only do it because thoughts – field notes, I sometimes call them nowadaze – keep coming to mind and I enjoy the linguistic exercise. Yes, I put them out there in cyberspace, and sometimes make up hard copies to give away, but would probably write even if no one was around to read them. Although I've joked in the past that I'm toying with history, in reality the world is far too confused to hear anything I have to say, and I neither expect nor care that anything ever comes of anything I've ever written.

So, as far as your writing goes, I say if you enjoy the process, then great. If not, stop, eat more food, drink more wine, watch more movies, and take more long walks with le Blue.

Ciao, ciao for now. Enjoy the day as best ye may.

M

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Hey, hey,

Yuppity-yup on your first paragraph. An amazing one-time light show that often requires more than its share of stoicism. It is you, you are it. Ain't no two or more ways about it. And it will all be over for both of us relatively soon.

When I wrote about John still being in your corner, it's more about him not booting you out. I'd hate to see you having to live in that nice new car or push a grocery cart around. I certainly don't expect that you two will ever be much more than roommates. How you ever even got together is in fact a great curiosity to me.

And as you might well imagine, I've always considered marriage counseling to be something of a joke. My view of relationship at this writing is that you either get along, see eye to eye, so to speak, or you don't, and no amount of trying to work things out is going to change that. You play out who you are, he plays out who he is, and the only decision to be made is whether you want to continue being a part of each other's dream. John offers a safe harbor, so, given your alternatives, in my mind it seems pragmatic to endure it as best you are able.

As far as your physical security goes, are you at all eligible for disability anymore? And have you worked enough to get Social Security when you hit 62 or beyond?
Regarding your wrist issues, I strongly suspect it may well be too much tension in the neck and shoulder areas around the spine, and, though I understand insurance won't cover it, highly recommend either chiropractic or heavy duty massage if you can somehow manage it. Below are some health-givers I went to before leaving for Humboldt.

Russ Kalen and his CranioSacral technique might be very helpful, especially given your head injury:

Russ Kalen
http://drkalen.com/

Jenny Fitton introduce me to what I call gentle chiropractic, officially known as Directional Non-Force Technique:

Wellness.com: Jennifer Fitton
http://www.wellness.com/dir/438013/chiropractor/ca/chico/jennifer-fitton-dc

Directional Non-Force Technique
http://www.nonforce.com/

Michael Tonetti had a great set of hands back when I was putting money into my body:

Health Grades: Michael Tonetti
http://www.healthgrades.com/provider/michael-tonetti-g4rb6

Dealing with Gravity
http://dealingwithgravity.com/sub_bio.shtml

And as far as the printer goes, I hope you realize that I bought it to help you get out of teaching and writing into a more enjoyable livelihood. Your Rock On! entrepreneurial effort seemed like an idea worth pursuing, a fun little project for me, as well, and it was unfortunate that natural ingredients couldn't hold up to weathering. At this writing it's obviously way more technology than either of us will ever need given our ambitions for this world. I would prefer the money to the possession of another thing, but am ready to write it off and take it off your hands, so that you can focus on your health and other more important things.

Had some brake and alternator work done on the van yesterday, and plan to get up there mid-October.

So, see you in a few weeks.

Ciao, ciao,

M

* * * *

Facebook Messenger response in 2015 to Lilliana Bava-Braico after her sons, Chris and Mark, were killed in an automobile accident:
Just watched the YouTube trailer. I knew Chris was doing a lot of photography, but didn't really click that it was for a documentary, and so powerful from the cut of the trailer. What a hell it is for so many people. And why wouldn't Charles Shaw give Chris credit for credit due? What a world. I am so weary of humankind at times. Netflix doesn't have it on disk at this writing, so I will hook up on streaming to watch it in the near soon. Glad you brought it up.

Google Search: Exile Nation: the Plastic People
https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Exile+Nation:+the+Plastic+People&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Some nice reviews if you scroll down a bit:

Amazon Prime: Exile Nation: The Plastic People
https://www.amazon.com/Exile-Nation-Plastic-Chris-Bava/dp/B00POTA9DK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1523398200&sr=8-1&keywords=Exile+Nation%3A+the+Plastic+People

I don't know if you will remember, but my only memory of Chris on East Pine Street was the time he accidently kiboshed me with a golf club. He was practicing his swing out in your front yard. My own dang fault, of course. He told me to get back, and I didn't understand what was going on. The backswing caught me above the forehead hairline, and I ran home screaming. Don't know how old I was; probably anywhere from three to five. I'm pretty sure he felt really bad, and brought bed-ridden me a nice little gift as an apology, probably your doing. Have always treasured that little battle scar. The hairline has receded enough to barely see it.

* * * *

Facebook Messenger response in 2015 to Clay Barth from the Class of ’72:

Hey, Clay,

The 45th reunion, assuming we do it, will be in 2017. Don't know where it will be – Kathy's place in Denair worked out great last time, and I'm thinking she might go for it again – but with all the email addresses and Facebook pages, we're pretty well dialed in on getting the word out whenever it happens.

This getting old thing is definitely getting old as far as I'm concerned. It's been an interesting life, but there's sure a lot of snap-crackle-pop going on in this body with all it's been through. Am in reasonably good health as far as the numbers go, but I'm not tossing it around near as much as I used to, that's for sure.

As far as relationship goes, I've had a number of girlfriends through the years – even had a few pop the question to me – but always enjoyed my solitude too much to settle down. Men and women are different species as far as I'm concerned, and good friendships have always suited me best. A sociable loner is how one friend labeled me. That said, it seems like you've had a couple of pleasant marriages while they lasted, and a nice collection of offspring to show for it, so good luck to you on running into someone that clicks.

Conversations  Michael J. Holshouser 221 of 289
Don't know if you ever get out to California to visit your clan, but if you do, we should get together for some catch-up.

Take care,

M

* * * *

First email to Sarlo in 2008:

Sarlo's Guru Rating Service

Sarlo,

Was online looking up Ram Tzu, and somehow ran into you. A very interesting set of reflections you've mustered!

I am neither master nor wannabe. Below is a link to an aphoristic work that came out of the day-to-day since 1990-ish. Lots more in the can. Not all that known, and don't really need for it to be, but thoughts just keep bubbling to mind in any given daily wander, and I, for the enjoyment tinkering with words gives, just keep jotting them down. Usually share a spiral-bound hard copy or website address in serendipitous fashion with friends, acquaintances and strangers who seem open to pondering such things. No followers, no organization, no bothers.

The Stillness Before Time
http://wwwthestillnessbeforetime.com/

I'm hoping maybe you, who has obviously taken a pretty serious look at things, can knock some sense into me, tell me to give it up, so that I can get on with my life, such as it is.

Thanking you in advance.

Ciao,

Michael

* * * *

Letter to Chuck Chojnacki regarding the debt owed from the failure of our brief Chico Hedway partnership:

Michael J. Holshouser
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto, CA 95355-5213
Cell: (209) 988-6271 Work: (209) 668-8594
mholshouser@gmail.com
Januarу 4, 2010

Charles Chojnacki
2316 Masterson Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Chuck,

Hope this finds you and yours healthy and happy in the opening days of the new decade. I’m doing well in a low-key way over in the Central Valley where I was raised. Still working for Creative Alternatives wearing a variety of hats. It’s not the geography I’d favor living in if I had my druthers, but it’s close to my aging parents in a tolerable zone, so I’m relatively content.

It’s been over fifteen years since you promised to pay your half the debt that I covered out of my retirement savings in our close-but-no-cigars residential care attempt. It was an interesting time, full of possibilities. I think we had a good partnership going for a good purpose, and have always wondered what would have happened if Marge and the State hadn’t pulled the plug.

I haven’t made an issue of it so that you would have an opportunity to create a secure haven for yourself and your children. I’ve always hoped that at some point you would have the means, either through your own effort, or through inheritance, to make things right between us.

In the rural roots I come from, the mark of a man is his word. As Seneca said a couple thousand years ago, “Nothing deters a good man from doing what is honorable.”

Hope to hear from you.

Take care,

M

* * * * *

Letter to Larry Ellison after watching the America’s Cup in San Francisco:

Michael J. Holshouser
1112 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto, CA 95355-5213
mjholshouser@gmail.com

Larry Ellison
Oracle Corporation
500 Oracle Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065

July 15, 2013

Larry,
While perusing the America’s Cup online site, I segued over to Wikipedia to read your biography – which says you came out of your youth a religious skeptic – and thought I’d send a little philosophical work written twenty-ish years ago, on the off chance it might ring true for you.

Also, bon voyage in San Francisco. Quite a thing to have the America’s Cup in our back yard. These catamarans you folks have designed are amazing. Am looking to get over there a time or three for some wine-and-song viewing from the shoreline. Had a San Francisco Pelican years ago – which I foolishly let go as I headed off for a new adventure – that taught me just enough on a couple nearby Sierra foothill lakes to dimly appreciate what goes on out there.

Am also reading Patrick O’Brian’s Aubrey-Maturin series – the fictional books upon which the movie “Master and Commander” with Russell Crowe was based – and highly recommend a look-see if you haven’t ever picked them up. O’Brian’s articulate view into the world of sail, the play of history during the Napoleonic era, the early years of the sciences exploring the unfolding panorama of the planet, along with the seemingly endless foibles of human nature, is a wonder to read. A number of resource books and online websites – O’Brian has quite a following – are available to add spice to the reading. It was disappointing the powers that be in Hollywood didn’t see fit to follow-up with a sequel.

Congrats, by the way, on a most interesting life. You’ve certainly gleaned a no-holds-barred statistical sample of what this mortal theater offers. Best wishes and keep on enjoying as best ye may.

Ciao, ciao,

M

* * * *

Email to Robin Slovacek:

Hey there,

As far as the second book goes, I got as far as the first sixty pages, and then – between all the distractions I manage to come up with in the retired life – moved back to working on getting the bulk of everything else, what I call the compendium, edited and uploaded. Another 70 chapters of ten pages each to go on that little project.

Essentially, the big picture is that everything that's been written since 1990-ish, an undated journal of thoughts, will be posted online in the three components below for the dream of consciousness to do with whatever it will or will not. All no charge, as I am not interested in marketing it, or creating some traveling salvation show. My solitude is far too precious to surrender to that sort of on-stage silliness.

So anywho, this is a general sketch at this writing of how it will all be organized:

The website for the original book of 50 pages of aphorisms, essays, and lists of movies and books, with links to everything else:
The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

The second book, currently 60 pages posted, with a vague intention to gradually get it up to 100 to 200 pages before it's over:

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/2010/05/ponderings-of-yaj-ekim.html

And the compendium of everything else, probably well over 3,000 pages once everything's uploaded:

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

So, it is for you and others to share or not. Plenty of other silliness already out there – as Sandra Ma says, lots of babble – so I sure wouldn't be surprised if it goes largely unnoticed in the annals of whatever time remains in this unfolding dystopian drama. The memes are strong, and every day stronger. So it goes.

Enjoy as best ye may.

Ciao, ciao,

M

* * * *

Email to Misty Jones:

Hey there,

The thing about the Central Valley is that it is fairly dense as far as free-thinking goes. The memes are strong and stronger every day. There are some nexus points where people explore awareness if you are ever willing and able to make the move, but meanwhile, alas, you must carry on, stiff-upper-lip-it, so to speak, in chameleon mode. It is doable if you hold to the inner clarity that in this asylum of a world, where absurdity reigns, it need not be you who wanders about babbling inanity. Though ever a challenge, it can be endured if you stay true to your Self.

Meme
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme

Groupthink
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink

Brainwashing
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brainwashing
*Response to an inquiry from Ingrid Koch on Facebook:

Hey, Ingrid,

Sorry I didn't get back to you sooner. Must have missed your original message. Yes, the name Holshouser (We pronounce it Holtzhowzer) is German in origin. I believe it means wood house. As far as I understand it, my father's side came through England in what is now South Carolina during America's colonial period. After the Civil War, younger sons headed out to Texas, and my father was two years old when my grandparents moved out to Hughson – a small rural town in Central California – just before the Great Depression.

My mother's side is also German – Kurtz is her maiden name – was also pre-revolutionary, but came through the North via Pennsylvania on into Ohio. My understanding is that they were Brethren as far as religion goes. My mother's parents, both from Ohio, attended college, married, and had my mother in Southern California. They moved up to Modesto – about ten miles away from Hughson – before World War II. Mom and Dad met at the wedding of mutual friends, and married a few years later during the early 50's.

As far as Facebook goes, many of those thousand are people I actually know, and many are cyber folk I've run across through internet travels. I use Facebook to connect with people who are inquiring into the world on a deeper level. I use my page to post a variety of interesting links and graphics, as well as my own thoughts. If you work your way down my wall, you will find a wide variety of things to ponder.

And I believe the distance between Switzerland and California is about nine time zones apart, so for all practical purposes your day is my night. It's just past 16:00 hours at this writing.

Take care,

M

P.S. I was also going to mention we don't know much about our European ancestry because most records were destroyed during World War II. Most likely migration to the New World occurred because of a combination of religious persecution and economic opportunity. It's rumored that the Holshouser side had a big land grant in South Caroline through its years in England, but I haven't felt all that inspired to dig into it more deeply.

*Email to Gina Vance of Integrative Wellness in Modesto after a reflective meeting on my writings:
Gina Vance  
https://www.facebook.com/gina.vance.7

Gina,

Well, that was quite an unexpected adventure! Very insightful in many ways. Afterwards, I hit a burrito truck, and then headed out to the Mall, where I just sort of wandered on empty. Came home, crashed, and now I'm up in the wee hours, straightening up the studio, prepping for the work day, and full of the thoughts below. Hopefully, I'll get a few more hours of sleep before hitting the road.

So, I looked at the Yellow Pages in the current phone book, and found web designers on Page 664. I also googled, and see there are a number free sites available where you can design your own website with web tools they provide, including geocities.yahoo.com.

Free Web Pages  
http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en-us&q=Free+Web+Pages&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Was also thinking you might consider utilizing Facebook and/or MySpace, which would also both be free. Seems to be a popular venue for musicians and other artists, so why not you and your crew? Not sure if it's as professional a the website you already have, but it would certainly be less expensive.

Speaking of which, don't know how much further you really want to delve into my existence, but a couple friends recently enticed me into setting up a Facebook site (I'd played with, and shut down, one on MySpace a year or so ago – didn't find chatting with "friends" who I would likely never meet all that interesting – generally prefer the real virtual reality), so I'll be sending you an invite in the very soon. Features a variety of photo albums of myself, family and friends that I've gradually been scanning these last six months.

Also, here are a set of blog links from an alter ego with a German last name you'll recognize from our afternoon introspection. I've been on quite a creative roll of late:

Uncle Sam Says  
http://unclesamsays.blogspot.com/

Uncle Sam Says Archives  
http://unclesamsaysarchive.blogspot.com/

Of A Philosophical Nature  
http://ofaphilosophicalnature.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder  
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Jester Amok  
http://jesteramok.blogspot.com/
The Lizard-Brainer Awards
http://lizardbrainerawards.blogspot.com/

Yes, I am easily distracted from my true avocation, whatever that be. Maybe we should call it the no-agenda agenda. But, then again, isn't the this-and-that of the day-to-day the nature and definition of philosophy. Besides which, it makes for more material to burn in the furnace of the Soul (Sounds like another possible title: "The Soul's Furnace" or some such thing. Yes, somewhere I keep a list titles)

Hey, it was great fun – completely unexpected, serendipitous in a most delightful painful way – and I'm looking forward to spending time with you in the now and then, as you have time and inclination.

Ciao,
Michael

PS  I'd be interested, if you're open to it, in making copies of the pages you were reading in those reference books. Some pretty amazing, insightful stuff.

* * * *

Email to Susan Warren of Chico:

Hey there, hi there, stranger.

Just thought I'd let you know your painting, probably the only original work I'll ever own, is a centerpiece favorite in my apartment. The other day when I was looking at it, it occurred to me to google your name, and see if you were out there in cyberland, Found your website pretty quickly – the picture of Katie and her boyfriend was the eureka moment.

Looks like life is going well in your school career, and your paintings are pretty impressive by my eye.  I re-framed "Empty Offer" a few years ago when the original plastic version gave way to time, and the abuse of my transience.  I've always been very fond of it because the message so well reflects my mystical cynicism.

For some reason I pictured that you were in Marin County.  I vaguely remember you mentioning Oakley and the name of your Free-something school, but didn't realize it was just on the other side of Stockton.  I'm down in Turlock south of Modesto, near where I was raised on a peach and walnut ranch in smallburg Hughson.

Am still working for the same outfit, Creative Alternatives, out at Reyn Franca School, our nonprofit special ed site in Denair. Life is low-key and stable for the time-being. Will be hitting 55 in November, and, although ye old back has its debilitating moments, the measurable numbers seem to be holding up well enough.

The philosophical ramblings are still a-bubbling up in the here and there. Not likely they'll ever get published, but it's been one of those enjoyable little pastimes. Don't think you were ever that
interested in them, but a website with a blog link that runs through my workplace server is below if you're inclined, or know somebody who might be.

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

Anywho, hope that you're healthy and happy, enjoying life, and that the boys, who must now be in their 20's (time and mind being what it is, I've lost track), are also doing well.

Take care,

Michael

-----

Susan’s response to the email above, intertwined with my responses:

Hey there,

Friday morning, and I’m at a coffee shop next to the garage where the school van is getting an oil change and a brake check. The teachers and aides are having what we call an “Articulation Day” today, and since my current role is organization-wide training and school transportation these daze, I get to kick back a bit and take care of details, including a couple pints of joe, maybe some lunch, and a good deal of catch-up and other thoughts interspersed in your email below … :)”

Susan: Hi Michael, I have a little time at home while my dinner cooks to write a few more lines. I just finished a yoga class and will dash off to eat as soon as it it done – I worked hard in class and I'm hungry!

So yea … those boys … Jay is going to be 30 in July (!!!) and has been married for 4 years to a woman I adore. They just moved from Seattle to a suburb in Houston TX (culture shock for all of us) …

Moi: Yeesch, I just don’t think I’d be wanting to make that sort of switch. Have spent a lot of travel time in the Southwest through the years, and I’m afraid the desert climate is not too high on the list of zones I’d be wanting to live in whatever time is left. Not that the Central Valley is high on that list, either, but here’s where the parents and job are, and so I’m committed for the time-being. More on that below.

Susan: … and John is 26, living in AZ working for Southwest Air … (I like to joke and tell everyone he is a pilot--he is a baggage handler). They both moved to be with their dad in AZ when I got the job at Freedom 13 years ago (that was a dramatic change).

Must have been real sudden shift in your reality. No kids in the nest, all alone in a very different reality from Chico, a new career, and not a friend much closer than a hundred miles. More yeesch.

Susan: John has stayed in AZ with all of his high school buddies and Jay just recently followed his dad to TX to help with his swimming pool business. Jay really got into the Rave scene (yes
and ALL that) where he met his wife Beth. They seem to be outgrowing some of not so great stuff around that scene and he mainly focuses on DJ-ing as a hobby and avocation. They moved to TX when his wife lost her job with a sub-prime mortgage company. She is now having an identity crisis that I am trying to support them through.

Moi: We had a lot to deal with when we were young, too, but I think everything that’s going on in current times would be even more overwhelming. I’m not sure what I’d do if ye old genetic lottery time machine had dropped me off at this point in human history. Amazing how much has happened in this last half century, and, of course, the century or so of industrialization before that. Life has never been easy for any human being, but humankind is definitely treading new ground in our little interactive dream of consciousness.

Ah, poor Beth, a cog in the sub-prime fiasco. Can’t believe the “experts” allowed this mess to happen. My only advice to anyone young or old is to work hard and well, and try to enjoy whatever you do, but don’t let it define you.

Susan: John came out here for a while after high school but really missed his friends and moved back after a few years. He was with his high school sweetheart until recently and is really starting to blossom now that they are moving on … taking akido classes and looking for more creative outlets in the future.

So that's the kids.

So me in a nut shell … I lived in Bethel Island in a quiet little place that I loved (and hated) for 9 years. Some good living and learning there. B.I.’s motto is that it is a drinking town with a fishing problem. I kept to myself and really learned how to enjoy being alone and connecting with nature – I lived right on the water – it was very beautiful.

Moi: Looked up Oakley and Bethel Island on Google Maps, and it does kind of look like an interesting place. Have never spent much time on the Delta; it’s definitely a hole in my California experience. Seems like mosquitos might be a bit of a bother, but I would think it would be pleasant to have a kayak or small motorboat to putter about. Not much of a fisherman, I’m afraid. My grandfather and father did quite a bit before I came along, and together we did some trolling on a lake or two, but my father was so involved with trying to survive as a farmer that he didn’t have the energy or inclination take off much for such things. He had great artistic potential as an outdoor sculptor, as well, but was never able to spin into a moneymaker, and so let everything drift into the back yards of several family members.

Susan: I also really focused on being the best teacher I could be – what a tough job!!! It took me some time to figure out how to manage (I am STILL doing that to a certain extent) but I think my students and the staff like me – aw shucks … they gave me a teacher of the year twice – imagine that! I can picture retiring here.

Moi: Gotta tell you that your being considered a most-excellent teacher doesn’t surprise me at all. My sense is that you have always given your best foot forward to everything you do. Excellence, quality – “Areté” the Greeks called it according to Pirsig in “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” – seem to me to be fundamental aspects to your character. Although I faded from your life, you
were very much a presence in the Chico zone, and I have a number of memories of watching you participating with dance groups and gatherings that were so much a part of the Chico scene during that time. Don’t know if all that is still the same. It seemed to evaporate in the mid-to-late 90’s, but maybe it was just me pulling back, and going other directions.

Susan: I moved away from Bethel Island to be with a fiery Argentine man ... almost married him but my friends and family intervened – thank god! We all agreed that I dodged a bullet!

Moi: Always amazes me how women are drawn to that passionate flame, and often pay a price of one sort or another – sometimes an unwitting child, sometimes a black eye. Another woman friend up in Chico did the same thing a few years back with a guy from somewhere up north, and his jealousy and temper really took her on a ride she was happy to end. Can’t tell you how many women friends I’ve known through the years who’ve lived to regret marrying and mating the guy whose whole repertoire was being able to throw a football, drive a hot car or motorcycle, or supplying the drugs. I’m sure it’s the reason some cultures mandate arranged marriages. So, my conclusion is that passion can be great fun, but, as I think is written in the Tao te Ching, a hard wind can’t blow all morning, or something like that.

Susan: I have lived in Concord for going on 3 years now in my most favorite house ever – a cute little brick back cottage built in 1947 with a big yard for a garden. I just had 11 raised beds put in and all I want to do is garden these days.

Moi: Looking at the map of that whole Contra Costa geography, Concord looks like a bit more of a commute for you than Bethel Island, but probably closer to a less delti-esque fishing and drinking mindset. The gardening option sounds good these days to me, too. As much as I’m still drawn to it, I’m more than a little weary of this racing mind-made world into which our species is careening. Was raised on a small 30-acre farm, but it was peaches and walnuts, and my parents weren’t into raising vegetables or livestock on the side. I’ve helped start a few gardens with others – my specialty is prepping the soil – but have never really tilled anything to fruition on my own. Sometimes I’ve thought about retiring up to a small community like Harbin Hot Springs, where I spent some time years ago, and taking up with the garden crew. But I ponder a lot of possibilities, and that retired portion of life is not in the immediate telling.

Susan: But – no can do. As well as working full time I am now a full time student in a yoga teacher training program put on by my local yoga studio. So I am a busy girl. At 49, I have put the African dance behind me somewhat … Zydeco is about as close as I get … or the occasional Samba at a party to show off. Yoga seems to be much more my speed.

Moi: Alas, these meat machines do slow down. Immortal soul, mortal body – is how I call it. Recently I heard or read, can’t remember which, “The hard part about growing old is remembering you were young.” But yoga is a good thing – used to do it quite a bit in the post-college years – and “busy girl” that you have always been, why not teach it?

Susan: How long have you been in the Modesto area? What is your work like? I know now to stop keeping my eye out for you in when I visit the Chico coffee shops.

Moi: Like I said in the original email, I’m from the Modesto zone originally, and through a series of serendipitous events, my wandering star brought me back in 2000. Had a lot of
different jobs in the years I was in Chico, and the last one at Kinko’s disabled me for a bit with carpel tunnel syndrome 1998-ish. Can’t remember the exact timeline, but there was between a year or two of disability. Went over to Humboldt State for eight months of State-paid rehab to brush off the teaching credential with a CLAD certificate. Wasn’t sure what I was going to do with it – didn’t really have a desire to go back into the day-to-day of a classroom – but it was the only empowering option the rehab process allowed. As fate would have it, just as things were wrapping up in December 1999, I happened to email an old buddy, Blane, at Creative Alternatives, where I’d worked a couple years in the mid-80’s, about getting together for a beer when I next got down there visiting family at Christmas. He wrote back that he was now executive director, and that I should come back. So, being the natural born “path of least resistance” practitioner that I am, here I am.

Creative Alternatives is a moderately-sized, homegrown non-profit that got its start 30-plus years ago (http://www.creative-alternatives.org/). It currently has three programs: group homes, foster family agency, and non-public special ed schools. When I was there in the mid-80’s, it was still mom and pop in size and mindset. By the time I returned in February 2000, it had transformed under new leadership into a more corporate entity. Eclectic character that I am, I’ve worn a number of hats in these eight-plus years. Worked at first for a brief while as a child care worker in the group homes, then ran a junior high classroom at Reyn Franca School for a semester, and then moved over the main office where I worked in the FFA in a variety of functions including certifying new families, facilitating organization-wide training, instructing first aid/cpr, fundraising for the emancipation scholarship program, taking pictures of special events, creating a variety of forms and spreadsheets, putting together the silent auction and Christmas party, acting as inhouse Notary Public, and whatever other little projects needed a go-to guy.

However, California’s hemorrhaging budget has been impacting our taxpayer-funded agency, and the industry in general, pretty harshly, and it’s forcing our management team to cut and splice in whatever way doesn’t impact their own paychecks and perks. The initial change put me back out at Reyn Franca School in a coordinator position for the last year and a half at the same salary. But, alas, in a series of personnel moves that subverted the need for my role as coordinator, I was recently downsized pretty drastically to an hourly training/transportation position. A key factor in all this is Blane, my executive director buddy, being sidlined by health problems for the last six months, leaving his second-in-command in interim charge. Although Joey and I get along very well, personal loyalty doesn’t carry the same weight as it did with Blane in better times. Though I’m sure the downsizing was carried out with his knowledge and reluctant blessing, it might not have happened if he’d been face-to-face at the helm. Anywho, after re-configuring the retirement deductions that I was feeding the full percentage possible, it works out to be about the same take-home disposable income. Though I’m still contributing to a company matched 403B, the 401K that I’ve been stoking full-steam these past eight years is now adrift as is in our lackluster economy.

And, as you might well guess of moi, I’m actually “so it goes” fine with it. I have done a great deal of largely unappreciated work by the powers-that-be in my time here, and was growing weary and somewhat bored with the mad pace of everything that had over time accumulated on the plate. The current job description is much more laid back, and suits my philosophical wander-about inclination. Am still making more than anything than I had going in Chico, and there are excellent health benefits, good vacation, holiday and sick leave, and a few other perks that make it worth staying. Don’t know what else I’d do anyway – no major adventures are
calling out on the horizon, pretty content just to be anymore, and starting over just isn’t as appealing as it was in the younger daze.

Am not real hot about the Modesto zone, either, but it’s been an interesting experiencing coming back to the original area after so many years elsewhere. Chief among the pluses, is that it has allowed me to be closer to the parents as they transition through their end game years. Good son that I am to good parents they’ve been, my intention is to see them through whatever’s to come, and after that, I’ll probably put myself into out-in-the-pasture mode. Dad, an ambulatory but frail 81, with the distinctive signs of minor stoke-driven dementia and/or early Alzheimer’s, has all but lost short term memory and the ability to logic out much of the day-to-day. Mom, 77, a mild-mannered low-key woman, is still doing pretty well. She plays a lot of bridge with a variety of groups, participates in a sorority called PEO, and, barring something unexpected, probably has a fair number of years left on her calendar.

I usually get up to Chico every year for a week-ish. The first several years, it was at Halloween, but when the powers-that-be quashed the masked ball festivities, I switched to the greener spring. I think that’s when I ran into you at Bidwell Perk. Wish now that I’d spent face-time catching up with you on life and times, but I was booked to chat with the guy you saw me with, and blew the opportunity.

Chico’s really the zone where I have the greatest sense of connectiveness. Kind of a curious thing that I left, I suppose. Had a great time in the not-quite ten years there, but the horse got shot out from under me job-wise enough times that I guess I was ready to get out of Dodge. And carpal tunnel was the ticket. Didn’t know where it would lead, but, for whatever reason, that’s the way I do things. Not very pragmatic, I suppose in retrospect, but, thus far, the life and times of Michael have been a pretty interesting wander.

Susan: You know … Empty Offer was and is one of my favorite works of art. I don't think I can explain it but that image just really spoke to me and I had to paint it. I am glad I did and I am so glad that you own it and appreciate it!

Moi: Empty Offer is a great piece for my point and purpose, and I imagine it will be with me until the last wheezing breath. One of these days, if you’ll deign it, I’ll have to buy you a bottle of wine to get your signature on it.

Susan:
Thanks so much for getting in touch :]
I am off to eat some dinner.
I look forward to hearing from you again,

Moi: Well, that’s probably more than enough for now. The van’s still not ready, but I suppose I’d better move on to a few work-related things while I’m on the clock. More another time soon-ish :]

Ciao for now,

Michael
P.S. Picked up this Apple MacBook a couple months ago. Used to have a company laptop, but it crashed and burned a year or so ago, and the boys in the band are switching most everyone back to desktops. So well. Anywho, these new versions have a quaint little camera, a new novelty in ye old little techno zone, so, for vanity’s sake, a snapshot of my favorite coffee mug is attached :]

* * * *

Response to an email from Joseph de Nicola:

Hey Joseph,

Thought I'd shoot you some thoughts about your comment: "Reading your The Stillness Before Time I don't get the impression of you as a cynic."

At this point, it seems like there's a bit of every label in me. And just because I write what I write in The Stillness Before Time doesn't mean I'm in denial about where we're heading as a species. Even if everyone suddenly woke up and started paddling furiously, by all the indicators in my vision, we'd still be drifting in a very strong current towards the falls.

I'll be glad to be wrong, but we're on new ground in the historical movement of our little human drama, and I'm not as optimistic as you seem to be that technology can keep us from the brink for much longer. Too many people, too much greed, too much ignorance, too much insanity, too much everything ... And the reality, from a statistical perspective, harsh as it may be, is that everything that goes up must eventually come down.

So, I suppose the compromise between us is to hope for the best, but plan for the worst.

And enjoy the day as best we may.

Ciao,

Michael

* * * *

Response to an email from Shannon Rooney:

Hey there,

John doesn't seem to be a perfect fit for you, but, then again, who is for any of us at this stage of our lives? All our lists of what we don't like about others grows daily longer, I'm sure. At least he's in your corner, and you have a roof over your head for the time-being. You may not need that security if your Mom leaves you a decent inheritance, or the rock enterprise become lucrative, but for now it's a safe, pragmatic haven.

Speaking of relationship, it may be premature to bring it up, but before you hear it from someone else, I thought I'd let you know that Susan Warren and I are kind of hooking up in a distance relationship of sorts. I don't even know if you know who she is, but I met her in Chico in the early 90's while she was raising a couple boys and going to school. Nothing happened back then,
but we've reconnected on Facebook, and have spent enough face-time to warrant bringing it up out of respect for what you and I had, and in many ways, at least in my mind, still have together.

She lives in Concord, and works teaching art at a high school in the Antioch area. Her boys are all grown up and in worlds of their own. Not sure where it might end up, but early indicators are strong that we may be hanging out quite a bit as time and distance allows. She's got a personality and intelligence that resonates nicely, as did yours, with my own. She's rather idealistic in a Buddhist sort of way, so some of my predispositions towards things that shall not be named are a bit rough for her to comprehend embracing.

So, like I said, it's perhaps premature to bring it up, but since you were the most successful relationship I've had in my life, thus far, I just felt you should hear it from me first. Kind of a surprising turn of events, and nothing I would have expected given my often stated, and rather negative views toward male and female relationships, but, as is often said, never say never.

Anywho, enough of that. I'm sitting in a coffee shop waiting for some tire and brake work on the school van to be completed at the garage next door. The day is cooler than the last few, so it's pleasant set of moments to get paid to sip coffee and ponder the mid-life reverie.

Hope things go well with your Mom. Sounds like she needs to stop resisting residential care, or at least surrender to live-in assistance. What a bother the endgame is. At this end, Sister Ann and I are going to meet with a lawyer next week to be sure Mom and Dad's trust is set up for all the contingencies we may be facing before it's over. Ugh!

So good luck, and enjoy as best ye may!

Ciao,

Michael

* * * *

Letter sent to several politicians regarding changes being considered to the California Worker’s Comp Program:

Michael J. Holshouser
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto, California 95355-5213
Home: 668-5732 Work: 634-9736
mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

August 27, 2003

The Honorable John Burton
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Burton:
It has come to my attention that a 15-visit cap to chiropractic care in Workers Comp situations is being considered by the Workers’ Compensation Conference Committee, and I want to express my concern about such a limit.

In 1998, while working as a key-op at Kinko’s in Chico, I came down with a disabling case of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. I was forced to leave that line of work, and in the next year or so went through a period of rehabilitation, which I am pleased to say has allowed me to return to the workplace.

The return to reasonable health has been a long and winding road. The initial use of medication was ineffectual, and included unpleasant side-effects. And as I considered the option of surgery, it became clear that success was not always assured. Several people I talked with that had undergone it were still suffering from the condition, as well as the often very painful results of the operation itself.

So in my own loosely scientific way, I chose to explore other routes before undergoing an irreversible procedure. My goal was to somehow overcome this very depressing disability, and to return to a suitable, satisfying line of work. In the four years since being sidelined, I have explored a number of alternatives including acupuncture, acupressure, cranial-sacral therapy, massage, and stretching. I even toyed for a brief time with such unlikely remedies as magnets.

Although each in its own right produced interesting results, none proved so effective as a branch of chiropractic care called Gentle Chiropractic. This approach is much more subtle than traditional chiropractic care in that it focuses on the soft tissues of the body to align the skeletal system rather than the reverse.

Gentle Chiropractic has allowed me to return to the working world, and to continue as an involved, contributing member of society. I currently work in an administrative and training role for Creative Alternatives, an organization that operates foster homes, group homes, and non-public schools in Stanislaus and Merced Counties.

A 15-visit limit on chiropractic care for Workers’ Comp cases would not have made this possible for me, and I fear many others who are likewise motivated to remain in the workforce, but be unable to because such a return might require several years of rehabilitation.

I realized the State of California is facing a tremendous budgetary crisis, but a I do not believe a 15-visit limit on chiropractic care will be in the best interest of its work-injured citizenry in the long-run. Rehabilitation can be a lengthy process, and injured employees should not be forced to take medication and undergo invasive surgery that offers no guarantee of success. Responsible, dedicated, tax-paying workers should be allowed to heal themselves in whatever way is in their best interest.

I hope you will bear in mind these thoughts in your consideration of the matter.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Holshouser
Response to a woman named Kathi on MySpace, who spotted my foster care coordinator role at Creative Alternatives, and wondered about my views on foster care:

Kathi,

I'm with one of the many private non-profit agencies out there that are overseen by the State of California to certify foster parents. We are probably middle-sized as things go, with an average of 100 foster children ages 0 to 18 in about 60 foster homes. We also have 17 group homes with just under 140 children ages 6 to 18, and have a couple special education schools with somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 students.

Re: the foster care system. Could be better; could be worse. And frankly, I'm not sure what could really be done to make it all that much better. Nations across the world handle what I call the throw-away kids in a variety of ways, and some I've heard about are a lot less pretty than ours. Don’t know how true it its, but I’ve heard that in China and Russia they have centers that are like concentration camps. In some of the larger cities in Brazil, I’ve heard there are kids running in feral gangs, and sometime the police shoot them.

What's really too bad, of course, is that people bring kids into this world that they can't or won't raise well. And then there are the many places in the world where wars are raising children as refugees, and others where culture are being decimated by AIDS, famines and other horrors.

Like anything in the human service sector, the effectiveness of any given system boils down to the people who get involved, and to what level they are capable of doing the right thing. Foster parents, social workers, counselors, management and support staff – what we do is a very bureaucratic exercise, and the day-in-day-out is very much a never-ending marathon. And, unfortunately, there is no shortage of kids being taken away from their families for every reason imaginable.

Trouble is, once a child is twisted by abuse and neglect, it's really hard for them to ever get back on the track they would have been on if they had gotten a fair shake in the first place. Factor into that things like genetic issues and substance abuse, and the whole thing spins even further a-field. Although there are probably many exceptions, the future for many of these children, and the future of our culture as a whole, is not likely to be a pretty sight.

My particular role in all this is fairly eclectic. The primary job duty is to bring aboard new foster parents, but I'm also in charge of training, some scholarship fund-raising, and a variety of special projects and sundry needs that come up now and again. As I said above, a challenging marathon.

Anywho, hope all this isn't too depressing. It seems to be my nature to be a little too serious about things. And in my vision, the world seems pretty darned mad these days, and is only getting zanier every day. But despite all the confusion, we as individuals can still be good caretakers in our own little zone. So, being a good mom to your children, a good caretaker to all those animals, a good friend to all your friends, and a good human being in general, will be as good as it gets in your part of the world.

Enjoy the day.
Ciao,

Michael

* * * *

Response to an inquiry by Nancy Moore of Santa Cruz about my perspective the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center complex in New York City:

Nancy,

I pretty much put everything in a big picture historical-anthropological context.

I feel compassion for the people who are enduring this at a personal level, but in my view, this is a cause-effect thing that reaches back far into the imagination of time.

It ripples from the mythological differences between the major religions that sprang out of the Middle East, all the conflicts in that region that happened before and since, the creation of Israel after World War II, oil, the Cold War in Afghanistan, the bombing of Libya, the war between Iraq and Iran, the on-going containment of Iraq, and all the countless slights that slap back and forth in anything connected with that area of the world.

The United States is the current Rome, and any Rome has countless enemies that seek its downfall. Terrorism is the only means the powerless have to wage war on the guy with a biggest club. The big guy calls the little guy a cowardly barbarian, but I'm not sure there's really a difference between a cruise missile targeted from hundreds of miles away, and a bomb left in a backpack in a cafe. Both evoke terror and suffering.

The small group that pulled this ingeniously simple act off, whoever they may be, has set in motion a tsunami in time that will ripple across the world in many ways for years to come.

It was bound to happen sooner or later, and my only surprise, frankly, is that it didn't happen sooner.

And it will, I am sure, happen many times in many ways for the rest of human history.

And I'm sorry to say that I think that we may well see things down the pike that will make September 11 look like a walk in the park.

It's the nature of the beast.

Michael

* * * *

Letter of inquiry about getting The Stillness Before time published:

Michael J. Holshouser
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
To Whom It May Concern:

While watching Factotum a few weeks ago, I was inspired to send you folks an unsolicited work a la Bukowski.

The Stillness Before Time is also online at the website: http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

More recent ponderings are at a blog titled The Return to Wonder: http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

And if such aphoristic fare ever proves to be of interest to a paying audience, there’s plenty more in reserve.

As I have no agent, if you should be inclined to publish, you can either recommend one, or we can deal directly with a fair formula contract and handshake.

Ciao,

M

* * * *

A couple letters to Arthur Braverman, the Japanese teacher during my two years teaching fifth-sixth grade at Oak Grove School in Ojai, author of several books on several Japanese Zen masters:

Amazon: Arthur Braverman
https://www.amazon.com/Arthur-Braverman/e/B00I0U7QHN4/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_2?qid=1518461690&sr=8-2

Michael J. Holshouser
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Cell: (209) 988-6271 Work: (209) 668-8594
mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

January 3, 2007
Arthur,  

When you gave me Nisargadatta’s I Am That in my world-weary state at Oak Grove in the late 80’s, it was a crystal seed that precipitated a wild ride in the 90’s. Lots of adventures, and an outpouring of thoughts that still have their moments. Enclosed is a short work that came together for a few publishing inquires that never materialized, but is meanwhile a nice once-and-awhile give-away to people open to such things. In retrospect, I sometimes joke that it should have been called The Silliness of Time, but the more serious-sounding title beat it to the punch.  

Your name popped in my head a few weeks ago, and when I googled, lo and behold, you’ve been busy. Will be looking forward to seeing what you’ve put together in your most recent work when I get the incoming Amazon order. I still recall all the time you spent sitting in the Pavilion and up on the hill. Am afraid I’m still not much good at anything so disciplined, but once and awhile I give it a lax shot. Went to one of those 10-day Vipassana retreats in the Yosemite area a few years back. Enjoyed it quite a bit, but I suppose you could call me zazen-challenged as far as being regular in the day-to-day goes.  

Anywho, thanks for being one of the many catalysts in my little life journey. Had read all sorts of Taoist, Buddhist, and a variety of other philosophers up until that point, but for some unknown reason hadn’t touched on the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu writings. The next few years were a real avalanche up in Chico, where I spent the 90’s in a variety of jobs and living situations. Lots of coffee, walkabouts, and who knows how many notebooks full of scribbling. Anthropological field notes, I sometimes call them. Over 2400 pages transcribed, so far. It does get old at times, and I don’t consider myself that great a writer, but the random enjoyment of stream of consciousness aphoristic wordplay, coupled with the discipline of running a newspaper pre-Oak Grove, keeps pen and paper at the ready. And the thoughts keep rolling out, so much the same, yet each so different in its own little way.  

Moved back to the original geography in the Modesto area in Y2K, where I work a bureaucratic job for a local nonprofit, spend time with the parents, and wander relatively anonymous about the sundry. Not sure I’m really any less world-weary and bemused at times, this manifest realm is not always easy on mind, but so it goes.  

Hope this finds you and Hiroko both well.  

Thanks again,  

M  

-----  
Michael J. Holshouser  
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive  
Modesto, CA 95355-5213
March 31, 2007

Arthur Braverman
45 Taormina Lane
Ojai, CA 93023-3627

Arthur,

I’ve very much enjoyed reading Living and Dying in Zazen. I knew you had spent quite a bit of
time in Japan, and met Hiroko there, but getting more details about the many adventures of
yourself and other foreigners, as well as hearing about the Zen teachers whose paths you crossed,
was all very interesting. It has even inspired me to sit a bit more to “watch my delusions,”
though I’m afraid I prize my still-reasonably-healthy-but-aging knees far too much to even think
about trying the lotus position.

Don’t know if you found my aphoristic work of much interest, but I wanted to let you know it
has gone through a pretty significant editing, something I’ll probably do every once and awhile
in whatever years are left. Mostly vocabulary, punctuation and grammar, along with a few
clarifications – the essential point, of course, remains the same.

A downloadable copy is available at the website if you’re inclined. Hope it’s okay that I added
your title to the booklist.

Take care,

M

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereeturntowonder.blogspot.com/

* * * *

Letter of recommendation for ex-girlfriend Shannon Rooney:

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mholshouser@creative-alternatives.org

June 9, 2007

Shasta County Superior Court
To Whom It May Concern:

Shannon Rooney and I were very close during the late 90’s in Chico where I met her while working for Kinko’s. Our two-year relationship came to a gradual close when I suffered a carpel-tunnel disability, and moved to Arcata in 1999 to attend Humboldt State to re-certify a teaching credential. After obtaining a CLAD certificate, I moved back to the Modesto area to be closer to my aging parents. Since February 2000, I have worked for a nonprofit organization called Creative Alternatives in a variety of administrative roles. Currently, I am at Reyn Franca School, a nonpublic special education school in Denair near Turlock. During my eight years in the Modesto area, Shannon and I have remained close friends through emails and time together when I visit the Chico area.

Shannon and I both shared an ironic sense of humor, and our time together was almost always enjoyable in a casual sharing of thoughts and observations of the world around us. Our interests were very simple, including making meals, sitting in coffee shops, and walks in Bidwell Park and the nearby foothills of Forest Ranch and Cohassett. While I was in Arcata, she and I often met at the half-way point in Weaverville, where she grew up and lived during her early adult years. We usually stayed at her mother’s place, and I was able to meet many of the people, and see many of the places that had impacted her early life.

I consider Shannon to be a very intelligent, personable woman with a great aptitude for verbal and written communication. In her earlier life, she was a prolific poet, and in the years we were together, and since, she has done a great deal of column writing for the Chico News & Review and other print media. While we were together, Shannon was attending Chico State to earn an English degree. To this she added a teaching credential, which has given her an opportunity to teach English at Butte College, and also at a variety of area elementary and high schools as a substitute teacher.

Because I have continued to be one of her confidants in the years since our break-up, Shannon has kept me abreast of what happened in April in Redding. Being caught and charged for shoplifting was a very real wake-up call for her, and she has since pursued help for what she calls an addiction from a number of sources including counseling, a 12-step program and an online support group. She is both embarrassed and remorseful for her actions, and has every intention of never allowing it to happen again.

Regarding Shannon’s emotional and health issues, I can say I have witnessed first-hand a woman who has repeatedly endured a great deal of hardship from a variety of fronts throughout her life. She was an unexpected child born after the adoption of two older siblings, has endured a very debilitating chronic autoimmune condition, experienced a very harsh divorce, and has since had an often difficult time raising their son due to court battles repeatedly initiated by a vengeful ex-husband. These, along with a variety of other challenging life experiences have, I believe, contributed to a chronic depression, which may have played a part in the shoplifting activity, the consequences of which she now faces.
From what I understand, I think there is little question that Shannon is guilty of the charges she faces. The question is what consequences she should pay. The two things that I would ask the Court to consider in making this decision are her fragile health and what she has to offer society. Rather than have her serve time in jail, I would encourage the Court to have her do some sort of work release program or community service, or a combination of both. This might include writing or speaking about her experience to individuals, groups or the community in general.

I would also encourage the Court to find a way, if at all possible, for Shannon to retain her teaching credential. It is the most viable way for her to earn a livelihood, and a very real way for her to contribute to the overall benefit of society.

My sense is that Shannon is a generally good person who got herself immersed in an activity she now deeply regrets; one that she will never do again. I believe, if given the opportunity and motivation, she will use her many skills to wield this experience into something that will benefit many individuals and the community at large for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Holshouser

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Stop Being Rude To Amazon Alexa, Carol

Steve: It's a machine ... politeness is to not hurt peoples feelings ... machines don't have feelings ...

Moi: But someday they will be coded by evil programmers to remember and wreak untold havoc.

Steve: This is nothing compared to what is going to happen when they have robot prostitutes … think about what people will do to those …

Moi: Surely, there must already be early models out there grinding away.

Steve: Yes … there is even a company that will “Rent” you one. Where I think this is going … is that they will become indistinguishable from actual women … and a company that makes these will partner with Uber … and Uber will partner with a self driving car company. So … you get on your phone app … pull down menus to pick what you want … it shows up at your door … you have your fun … then send it on it’s way.

In my opinion this will be nothing but fantastic for men … they can rent by the hour or weekend etc. … get an android woman that “learns” what you like … just like Siri or Alexa but on steroids … and it magically becomes the woman of your dreams. And when your done … you send it back … and can enjoy your life without all the headaches of a “Relationship.”
Women on the other hand … are fucked. They won’t have any leverage anymore … and no one will want to put up with all this crap they’ve had to for the last 10,000 years … so there won’t be any need for them anymore. Especially if the robots get cheap … which they will. Just look at cell phones … it used to be a luxury to own one … you had to be rich … and now … I see homeless people in wheelchairs begging for change … while talking on their cell phones.

Looking forward to it …

Moi: Another level of brave new world.

Brave New World

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The Marriage Market May Be More Imbalanced Than You Think
https://medium.com/migration-issues/the-marriage-market-may-be-more-imbalanced-than-you-think-fb580717f163

Steve: Yeah … look at the area I live in … there are a LOT of educated rich dudes here to compete with … and few women …. And they are all gold diggers … which is why they call this “Man Jose” …

It sucks being a single guy in this area … unless you’re rich … which I’m not … and I’d add that in general … it sucks being male in the US … women complain about being Sex Objects … but simultaneously advertise themselves as such … then complain when they get approached for sex … which is insane.

And women treat men like Success Objects … they fuck whoever provides the most material wealth … which is essentially prostitution in my book … so most women in this area … are whores … and I’d add that that is true in any major city in the US in general … and our culture promotes that as a way of life.

Moi: We’re in a time of the anarchy of all values across the world, of which the dance of male-female is likely first and foremost center stage. Nobody’s fault, really, just the consequence of too much technology, too much affluence, too much knowledge, too much religion, too much et cetera et cetera, all highlighted by too many friggin' people jammed into too little space on this magical spinning garden world. No solution except major dieback or complete extinction.

* * * *

Response to Mark Bava, a fellow K-12 Hughson Class of ’72 alumni, as well as one of the neighbor kids on East Pine Street up until age seven, when we moved out to the peach ranch on Hatch Road:

Mark,
Came back to the Valley in 2000 to work for Creative Alternatives, and be closer to the parents as they wander through their end-game.

Yes, I did read your centennial piece. It was great. Brought back all sorts of similar memories. That commonality is what has been fun about spending time once and awhile with Esther and Marcia. Esther just emailed me that this Sunday, Russell Wallers wants to join us.

Wondered how the restaurant adventure would work out for you and Chris. It sounded like an interesting plan, but not an easy line of work, that's for sure.

Sounds like we've both lived Peter Pan lives. Still am at this end, I suppose, but I think the worst of the mid-life crisis part is pretty much behind me. No regrets about not having a partner or children. Never really felt a strong calling for it.

And for you, the artist's life, it strikes me that there are worse things.

Doubt you have much reason to travel over here, but if you do, feel free to call and we'll do some coffee or brewskies or whatever.

Ciao,

M

* * * *

Emails to Marge Brooks, a Hughson Union High School English teacher and occasional contributor the Modesto Bee, thanking her for all her good teaching:

Mrs. Brooks,

Hey there! Glad to see you're still around and writing. Thanks for all the good teaching and other memories way back when the way it was, was the way it was.

Michael Holshouser

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And a follow-up email to her response that she didn’t realize I was back in the area:

Marge,

Sorry not to get back to you sooner. The filter routed you to the spam folder, and I only check it once a while to make sure I'm not missing someone important.

Came back into the area in 2000 after a couple years teaching in Ojai, ten odds and ends years in Chico, and part of another doing rehab for carpal tunnel at Humboldt State in Arcata. Have been working for Creative Alternatives for nine years wearing a variety of hats – the current one is out at the Reyn Franca School special education site in Denair.
Have also, of course, spent a fair amount of time with the parents. Dad just come home from a stroke that we originally didn't think he'd survive. He's still ambulatory, but his mobile-but-weak-and-uncoordinated right arm is starting rehab. He's had several TIA's and seizures these last several years, which have taken away his short-term memory and ability to logic out much. Along with being very deaf and completely toothless, I'm afraid he's well into that challenging time of life.

Anywho, on the personal front, it's been quite an existence, so far, filled with a healthy statistical sampling of life experiences. Literally no stone unturned if there was a glimmer of interest. Will be turning 55 in November, so it's been nearly two score since the HUHS years started. Pretty amazing how far ye old mindset has traveled.

Probably one of the greatest ironies is how much of this life has been spent writing, taking pictures and putting together things like newspapers, rodeo programs, yearbooks, newsletters, brochures, flyers, weddings and other special event photography. Considering I never did anything much extra-curricular like that in high school, it's one of those curious things.

Also ended up being something of an aphoristic philosopher with a little work titled "The Stillness Before Time" online at the address below. Don't know if it will be your cup of tea, but its reflects the journey that started in little old Hughson. Nothing that's all that popular at this writing, but there's a fair number of people who've found it matches their thoughts on life and times.

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

Hope all's well for you. Just wanted to say again how much I appreciate everything you offered as a teacher and well-intentionioned soul during those years our lives crossed.

Take care,

Michael

* * * *

Response to a letter from Merritt Hulst, a friend from the Waterford years:

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May 5, 2008

Merrit,

Finally getting this to you. Not sure at what point in the 90’s that I sent whatever version you already have. It’s been an evolving, serendipitous process, and I figure this latest update will
have a few more sections, additions to the book and movie lists, plus a fair amount of editing of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and the like. Though articulating ye old thoughts has always been an enjoyable pastime, my linguistic abilities, as much as I would desire it otherwise, alas, have more than a few limitations. So this little philosophical work is always getting tinkered with in this way or that whenever I bother to take a look at it. Probably will until the last wheezing breath. And if you go to the website and link to the blog titled, “The Return to Wonder,” you’ll get a sense of how all these little ditties just keep on bubbling up in the day-to-day. I often ironically call it “The Silliness of Time” rather than the more serious-sounding title that popped into mind early in the game.

And if you do take a peek at the blog, what you’ll find is just a fraction of the compendium of all that’s poured out since things started percolating, in what I sometimes call my mystical uprising, 1990-ish. Over 2665 pages digitally transcribed so far from who knows how many notebooks and scraps of paper. Of course, what I’m saying doesn’t seem to be all that appealing to most folks, and will probably never be officially published, which is fine. Such things are not all that marketable (i.e., it’s not Harry Potter). It’s really more of a pleasant diversion than anything that’s going to change anything. Nothing that hasn’t been put into words somewhere in the boggle of human history, I’m sure.

But it’s been an interesting, amusing process, nonetheless. Have passed it on to a number of people through the years. Some toss it, some ignore it, some return it, some argue it, and those for whom it is written, sometimes inhale it like a breath of fresh air. Some, including three retired spiritual bookstore owners, have bought copies for their families and friends. So who knows what’s to come of it in the long haul. An unanticipated life, of that there can be little doubt. Free will looking forward, fate looking back – is how I’ve come to view it.

Seems like being a part of a Quaker church is a good fit for you. What little I know of the their interpretation, they’ve always seemed like one of the more reasonable approaches to what Jesus was trying to get across about community and relationship before he got himself crossed. Sure would have been interesting to have seen what his teaching might have flowered into if he hadn’t wandered – intentionally by the hand of god, or naively in his own arrogance – into martyrdom via Jerusalem’s power elite. I, as you might well guess, think the latter. But, whatever the case, in the crap table of the human drama, his roll of the dice have played out in every way imaginable across the board, and here we are, the theater of man, exponentially accelerating in every way mind and technology allow, far and away more confused and conflicted than it could have possibly been 2000-plus years ago. Why hasn’t he come back to redeem his many followers? To this fine mess . . . Would you? If there is a supreme being in some sort of Zeus-like persona, he/she/it probably isn’t as much dead as exasperated to tears and unutterable boredom with all our vain free will patter. Just one life of all this inanity has been enough for me to oftentimes be world weary to the extreme. Can’t imagine having to endure it for the rest of time. Suppose you might call it creator’s remorse, or some such thing.

And, of course, it doesn’t surprise me that you’re still the handyman ministering to friends and strangers alike. All those hours we spent working on your house, chatting away while you made signs, and who can recall how many other little escapades, are fond memories upon which I have often reflected. Tried contacting you when I first came back to the area sometime post-Y2K. Got a hold of David – Sorry for your loss, by the way. Missed saying something to you when we talked on the phone. In my few interactions with him, he seemed to be everything that was said
of him in the Modesto Bee obituary – and he gave me Analise’s phone number. Left a message, but didn’t follow up when there was no response. Just kind of figured you had moved on to new adventures, and let it go at that. Only decided recently to give it another try by mail to David’s address, which you seemed to have received, as you say, in a rather unfortunate turn of events.

Took a look at Analise’s updated website, by the way, and it’s pretty impressive. Quite a whirlwind of creative talent you’ve hooked up with. Must take you on many adventures outside the realm of the Waterford daze.

Anywho, I’ve babbled on enough for now. It’d be good to see you again someday. Doubt I’ll get down to San Diego anytime soon, I’m afraid. Am less of a traveler than in the younger days, and am somewhat adverse to Southern Cal and all it’s urban zaniness. It’s often overwhelming enough in the Modesto/Turlock zone without seeking it out in spades down there. Lived in Ojai a couple years while teaching at Oak Grove School, and, although it was an interesting experience, it was enough to put anything south of San Luis Obispo behind me. Currently live in an apartment a few blocks from Stanislaus State, and – despite its many man-made ponds and some architectural designs that would have Ayn Rand’s Howard Roark spinning in his fictional grave – long, solitary walks several times a week have become one of the favored pastimes. So, hopefully, you’ll wander up this direction in the not-too-distant future, and have some time to ruminate on life and times, and all our many adventures over a few cups of stained water.

Keep on enjoying.

Ciao,

P.S. Since you played a significant part in the younger daze – amazing that it’s been 20-ish years, how quickly it all passes, such a mirage of memories, not exactly sure when or how I drifted on – I’m also enclosing a life resume that I keep for kicks that will give you a snapshot of some the things that have happened along the way in this rather oblique existence.

* * * *

Breadcrumbs: Life Resume
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_68.html

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Modesto, CA 95355-5213
mjholshouser@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Cultural Language Acquisition Development Certificate
Humboldt State University, Arcata

Multiple Subject and Single Subject Social Studies Credentials
University of Pacific, Stockton
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration
California State University, Chico

Associate of Arts, Business
Modesto Junior College

TIMELINE

Turlock - Retired April 1, 2011

Aimless wandering and any general puttering that comes to mind in whatever time is left In the magical mystery tour for this aging sack of flesh and bones.

Turlock - 2000 to 2011

Employee & Foster Care Training Coordinator and RFS Student Transportation – Residential Care, Foster Family Agency & Reyn Franca School, Creative Alternatives, Turlock and Denair
RFS Coordinator – Reyn Franca School, Denair
FFA Coordinator – Foster Family Certification and Training, Turlock
Administrative Assistant – Creative Alternatives, Turlock –
Foster Parent and Employee Training, FirstAid/CPR Instructor, Advertising, Interim Human Resources Coordinator, Transportation Coordinator, ITFC Program Coordinator, Notary Public, Graphic Arts, Grace Bishop Scholarship Chairman, Christmas Party and Silent Auction Chairman, Special Projects Coordinator
Instructional Aide – Reyn Franca School, Creative Alternatives, Denair
Child Care Worker – Residential Care Homes, Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Technical Support – Sandpiper Technologies, Manteca

Chico - 1990 to 1999

Express Coordinator, Machine Operator, Copy Consultant – Kinko's
Sales, Craft Fair Coordinator – Meraz & Associates
Barista – Starbucks
Security – Grass Valley World Music Festival - Maple Creek Presents
Taxi Driver, Dispatcher – Eagle Taxi
Sales – Christensen Designs, Manteca
Author, Publisher, Website Design – "The Stillness Before Time"
ATM Technician – Wells Fargo Armored Service Corporation
House Restoration – 1111 Oleander Avenue – Lee Hoffmann
Security – Chico World Music Festival - Maple Creek Presents
Security – Shakespeare in the Park - Maple Creek Presents
Clam Shucker, Dishwasher – Annual Bravo Opera Ball - Zephyrs
Auction Aid – Public Estate Auction – Mansfield Auctioneers
Operations, Teacher, Partner – Residential Care – Chico Hedway Programs
Sales, Ferry Harvest Farmers Market – Mountain Fruit Company
Social Security Administration Payee – Patrick Dauwalder
Sales, Stock, Custodial, Inventory – Sierra Stationers
K-12 Substitute Teacher – Butte and Tehama County Schools

Ojai - 1988 to 1990

Morning Bread Baker – Ranch House Restaurant
Housesitting/Caretaking – Various Ojai Homes
Fifth-Sixth Grade Teacher – Oak Grove School
Summer School Director, Bus Driver, Yearbook Advisor, Options Instructor, Drama Lighting Director – Oak Grove School
Waiter, Host – Franky's Restaurant, Ventura
Arts and Crafts, Trail Riding, Counselor – Gold Arrow Camp, Huntington Lake

Hughson - 1983 to 1988

Fifth Grade Teacher – Hughson Elementary School District
Child Care Worker – Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Assistant Social Worker, Foster Home Program – Creative Alternatives
Photographer – Weddings, Special Events, Portraits – Self-employed
K-12 Substitute Teacher – Stanislaus County Schools
Forklift Operator – Martella Walnut Huller
Publisher, Sales, Layout – La Grange Rodeo Program
Animal Trail Naturalist – Old Oak Ranch, Columbia
Word Processing Instructor – Alpha Com
Editor, Columnist, Photographer, Sales, Layout – Hughson Chronicle
Children's Program – Strawberry Bluegrass Festival, Yosemite
Teaching Aide – Modesto Montessori School
Hired Hand – Roen Ranch Right Fork Cattle Company, Waterford

Los Gatos – 1982

Consultant – California Commission on Violence Prevention, San Jose
Sales – Chanticleer Children's Bookstore

Waterford - 1980 to 1982

K-12 Substitute Teacher – Stanislaus County Schools
Forklift Driver – Martella Walnut Huller, Hughson
Publisher, Sales, Layout – La Grange Rodeo Program
Home Reconstruction & Caretaking – Merritt Hulst

Waterford - 1978 to 1980

Editor, Columnist, Photographer, Sales, Layout – Waterford News
Yearbook Advisor – Waterford Elementary School District
4-H Photography Instructor – Waterford 4-H Club
Sales – Combined Insurance Company, Merced County
Sacramento, Reno – 1977

Department Manager, Home Division – Weinstock's, Sacramento and Reno

College Years – 1972 to 1977

Industrial Specialist, Engineering Branch – Alameda Naval Air Rework Facility
Waiter, Busboy, Dishwasher – Sizzler Steakhouse, Alameda
Swimming Instructor, Lifeguard – Ceres Recreation Department
Forklift Driver, Weigh Station Master, Sample Machine Operator, Bin Tagger
Joan of Arc Field Station, Hughson

The Early Years – 1953 to 1972

Farm Hand – Holshouser & Son (Family Farm), Hughson

SKILLS, HOBBIES, INTERESTS

Writing, problem solving, organizing, systems analysis, marketing, sales, human resource development, training, special events, bookkeeping, computer software, coding, copy machines, automatic teller machines, inventory control, form design, photography, drafting, housesitting, caretaking, general mechanics, bus driving, forklift driving, and other agriculture-related equipment handling.

String figures, knot tying, origami, paper planes, calligraphy, drawing, perceptual activities, military history and technology, trap and target shooting, archery, chess and other board, card, and dice gaming.

Walking, bicycling, swimming, racquetball, gym time, cross-country skiing, backpacking, spelunking, car camping, campfire design, sailing, paintball, four-wheeling, horseback riding, traveling, massage, yoga, macrobiotics, dancing, plants, reading, philosophy, channel surfing, aimless wandering, and general puttering.

Personable, articulate, disciplined, meticulous, punctual, eclectic generalist.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Learn to Sail in Four Days – J World Sailing Courses, San Francisco Bay
First Aid/CPR Instructor – American Red Cross, Stanislaus County
Notary Public – California, Stanislaus County
InDesign, Entourage, iPhoto, PageMaker, Photoshop, QuarkXPress, Eudora, Communicator, Palm Desktop, Graphic Converter, ScanWizard, iView MediaPro, PageMill – Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Michael Meade Mythology Workshop – Mosaic Multicultural Foundation, Community Church of Mill Valley
10-Day Vipassana Meditation Course – California Vipassana Center, North Fork
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), HTML Web Design – Humboldt State University, Arcata
Windows 98, Netscape, Internet Explorer, Regular and Color Copiers, and other related technologies – Kinko’s, Chico
Automated Teller Machines (ATM’s) – Wells Fargo Armored, Chico Area
Appleworks, Quicken – Chico Hedway Programs, Chico
Hunter Safety and Self-Defense Firearms Training – Safer Arms, Chico
Inventory Control – Sierra Stationers, Chico
Hand Drumming – California State University, Chico
Joel Kramer Yoga Workshop – Northern California
Macrobiotic Workshop – Macrobiotic Center, Harbin Hot Springs, Middletown
Tri-County Math Project – University of California, Santa Barbara
Bill Martin Language Workshop – California State University, San Jose
Right Side Brain Drawing – California State University, Long Beach
Great Books Leader Training – Junior Great Books, Santa Barbara
Direct Instruction – California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock
How Children Learn – Ottawa University Extension Class, Modesto

WEBSITE AND OTHER ONLINE CREATIONS

Website & Book
The Stillness Before Time
Reflections from a Fellow Sojourner
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

A 50-page PDF can be downloaded at:
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/stillness.pdf

Facebook, Google Plus, Blogger, Twitter

Facebook: Michael Holshouser
http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1166861214&ref=name

Facebook: Michael's Little Warehouse of All Things Amusing, Absurd & Profound

Facebook: Le Fichier Circulaire de Michaël
http://www.facebook.com/LeFichierCirculaireDeMichael

Facebook: Yaj Ekim
http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1166861214&ref=name

Google Plus: Michael J. Holshouser
http://www.blogger.com/profile/12270094801824803661

Blogger: Michael Holshouser
https://www.blogger.com/home

Twitter: Michael Holshouser

Conversations  Michael J. Holshouser  252 of 289
https://twitter.com/#!/YajEkim

Main Blogs

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com/

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/

Odds and Ends

Final Exit
http://finalexitandrelatedlinks.blogspot.com/

The Blind Men and the Elephant
http://theelephantandheblindmen.blogspot.com/

The Joyful Curmudgeon
http://thejoyfulcurmudgeon.blogspot.com/

Of A Philosophical Nature
http://ofaphilosophicalnature.blogspot.com/

The Four Agreements
http://donmiguelsfiveagreements.blogspot.com/

Le Fichier Circulaire de Michaël
http://michaelscircularfile.blogspot.com/

50 Rules Kids Won't Learn in School
http://50ruleskidswontlearnschool.blogspot.com/

12 Rules You Can Live By
http://12rulesyoucanliveby.blogspot.com/

How to Work in Any Environment
http://howtoworkinanyenvironment.blogspot.com/

Eight Translations of the Ashtavakra Gita

The Heart of Awareness (Byrom)
http://theheartofawareness.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Marshall)
http://theashtavakra.blogspot.com/

Bitten by the Black Snake (Schoch)
http://bittenbytheblacksnake.blogspot.com/

A Duet of One (Balsekar)
http://aduetofone.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Richards)
http://anotherashtavakragita.blogspot.com/

Astavakra Samhita (Wood)
http://astavakrasamhita.blogspot.com/

Ashtavakra Gita (Vedic Scriptures)
http://ashtravakrageeta.blogspot.com/

Translations of Other Ancient Writings

Ashtavakra Gita: I Am Shiva
http://ashtavakrigataiamshiva.blogspot.com/

Tao Te Ching: Verse One
http://taotechingverseone.blogspot.com/

Tao Te Ching (Marshall)
http://theperennialway-taoteching.blogspot.com/

Yoga Sutras (Marshall)
http://yogasutrasbypatanjali.blogspot.com/2014/03/unity.html

Dhammapada (Marshall)
http://buddhasdhammapada.blogspot.com/

Avadhut Gita (Shastri)
http://avadhutgitabydattatreya.blogspot.com/

Song of the Avadhut (Abhayananda)
http://songoftheavadhut.blogspot.com/

Atma Bodha (Chinmayananda)
http://theatmabodha.blogspot.com/

The Essence of the Ribhu Gita (Ramamoorthy & Nome)
http://theribhugita.blogspot.com/
Yo

gavasishtasara.blogspot.com/

Crest-Jewel of Discrimination (Madhavananda)
http://crest-jewelofdiscrimination.blogspot.com/

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on human greed:

Moi: The Monopoly game taught us everything we needed to know about capitalism. Round and round until the one-percenters and their minions own it all; the rest minding the hotels or homeless. Capitalism, or as I call it, consumerocracy, is about greed and self-interest, and egalitarian ethics has never been, nor will ever be, a concern to those who wield the whip. Few ever willingly hand over or share power, fame, or fortune. The masses may whine and grumble, but, unless they are inspired to revolution – which only puts new masters upon the throne – their lot is whatever crumbs drift down from the heights. Might makes right is the human paradigm that has played out over and over since long before we wandered from the jungles of origin out into the world. Nothing you or I say or do will change that.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on civility and the human paradigm:

Moi: Civilization is defined as “the stage of human social development and organization that is considered most advanced.” Civility is defined as “formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.” If getting along and supporting each other is the goal, the peak of any civilization, any community, any group, is gauged by how many abide the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. No synergy bent on a cooperative, health-giving one-for-all-all-for-one can long sustain without it.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on an article about America’s quest for happiness:

Moi: No matter where we meander, no matter where we rest our weary heads, getting through any given instant still boils down to a mindful dollop of detachment. Not taking it all so seriously, not taking ourselves so seriously, is the first and last challenge. Conscious of it or not, in one way or another, we are all playing out the Atlas of our conditioning, and learning to set down our imaginary universe may not be as hard as we choose to believe.

* * * *

Response to Sarlo on the compliment about all the work it took to write this:

Moi: Don't know that I'd call it work. More of a hobby, really. Thoughts just sort of come to mind, pen sets them to paper, and the keyboard does the rest. Just over 4,000 pages in a variety of blogs at this writing. An enjoyable process, but it’s highly unlikely that anyone but me will ever read it all.

* * * *
Response to cousin Steve on an article speculating that the world is a simulation:

Moi: Seems obvious that it is the awareness in all of us that's the source of this quantum theater. Not sure why we always need gods or aliens or some Matrix programmer to explain the inexplicable mystery that will always be an inexplicable mystery. You are it and it is you, and it ever boils down to just being in the moment, in whatever indivisible here-now the mind and senses are playing out.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on another article speculating that the world is a simulation:

Moi: The Matrix was an enjoyable movie, and certainly one that wrapped our minds around an interesting concept, but it was just a movie. I find it more than a little unlikely that we are wired up in a vat playing out a universe programmed by a galactic junior high student. I even find it curious anymore that we are so geocentric as to think there are other worlds with civilizations and life forms that parallel our own. I don't say there isn't other life out there in the vast timeless reaches, just that we are likely a unique one-of-a kind creation, seemingly well on our way to a very dystopian extinction.

* * * *

Response to Len Howard on the endgame:

Moi: You are preaching to the choir when it comes to irritability with all things great and small anymore. This world and body can be very annoying, indeed. There are far too many moments when it is extremely unwise to be in the exploding universe of my presence. Very challenging to always be detached, and I'm just approaching a sprite sixty-three. Hard to imagine how bothersome it will all be before the Reaper finally kicks this body to the worm pile. Being mindful of the innocents is the task, for the scorpion can and will sting without warning. I suppose the wordplay is often my salvation, my therapy, my means to put things in context, to seek out the larger perspective, to regain clarity and serenity in the miasma of the day-to-day. The Joyful Curmudgeon is what I call myself anymore, and he can be an unruly beast.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on an article about happiness:

Moi: Have never understood the futile quest so many people undertake for happiness. To me life is about living in the given moment, being as aware of eternity's passing with as much attention as the mind-body is capable of giving it. In this play of consciousness, some moments are indeed less painful than others, but there is no way they can always be joyful, pleasurable, or whatever other nirvanic soundbite we might give it. Life is process, life is segue, and all the punctuation marks, all the pleasures and pains, pass as timelessly as the points between. The people who are afraid to die are afraid to live, afraid to give themselves over to the eternal now we all really are, have ever been, will ever be. To be as innocent, as simple, as untainted as a child, is to give your self, your awareness, over to the undying moment, and few of we mere mortals are capable of that once desire and fear have become the all-consuming wraiths they are.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on an article about happiness in the workplace:
Moi: The quest for happiness has never been an issue for me. If you think about it, it ain't going to happen. All my workplaces have always just been workplaces, and my satisfaction with them entirely based on my own sense of self-actualization. Working in some sort of children’s playground with swing sets and slides is yet another rung of absurdity in these our times as far as I'm concerned. Being in the moment is its own intangible reward.

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Response to Bruce Styles and his rant about Donald Trump and the unfolding takeover of the White House:

Moi: And not to break your bubble, but our little republic was well on its way to being lost long before you and I were born. I've been using a variety of terms for years – corporate oligarchy, consumeracracy, consumptionacracy – to imply it nothing more than another footnote in the dreamtime of history. Ye old USofA was a nice little experiment, with all sorts of high-sounding wordplay and patriotic symbology, to which we were conditioned to pledge allegiance, just as doomed to failure as any city or nation state ever has been. The few have always ruled the many. Only the faces and names and means and memes change. Just a matter of how and when, never if. Trump and his crew of Alt-Righters are just the current issue, the current tools. The dress code may not be black or brown or march in lock-step, but the one-percenters and their minions are ever in charge. And the masses, the mob, the plebes, the proles, the citizens, call them what you will, loyally, blindly, incoherently, go along as long as they have their bread and circuses. And the hydra of technology only makes it easier and easier to sway them this way or that. Whine and moan and stomp your feet and even rebel all you will, it changes nothing.

You might want to re-read some George Orwell:

Nineteen Eighty-Four
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteen_Eighty-Four

Animal Farm
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Farm

Goodreads Quotes: George Orwell

Terry Gilliam gave us another good one:

Brazil (1985 film)

And, of course, Aldous Huxley:

Brave New World

And let us not forget Ray Bradbury's contribution to the mix:
Fahrenheit 451

Two of my Orwellian favorites:

The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth.

Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now you begin to understand me.

So it goes, too bad, so sorry, oh well, deal with it, get over it, move on.

Take a nice walk today. Sit in the sun, smell some roses. Don't resist when a shadow in a black suit puts the barrel to the back of your head.

Ciao ciao,

M

* * * *

Response to Gary Gerard on a Christian conversion story he wanted me to read:

Moi: Just finished reading the story you sent. Thanks for the good intentions, but it just doesn't do a thing for little old agnostic moi. I reside in the indivisible don't-know-don't-care, have no sense of there being a god outside my Self, and what happens if anything after this body falls off is of absolutely no concern. The existential here-now dreamtime is more than enough. By my reckoning, all mythologies are nothing more than human-created, fear-based, greed-laced, egocentric-ethnocentric-geocentric-heliocentric mind gorp.

So, from my perspective, enjoy the moment as best ye may; it is all you have and have not.

Ciao ciao,

M

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Response to Ross Avila asking about whether or not I had suffered in my quest:
There’s a dark side to meditation that no one talks about
https://qz.com/993465/theres-a-dark-side-to-meditation-that-no-one-talks-about/

Moi: Have definitely had my times of agony and ecstasy. The mind is quite adept at torturing itself in every way imaginable. We are all mentally disordered to some degree by my reckoning. To be totally detached, and still be in the world, is only for the rare few, and even those few likely suffer at times if they are at all honest about it. The collusion of identity that our kind has orchestrated in its ascendance from the jungle has brokered every possible illusion and delusion that imagination can imagine. And the day ain't over.

The brain is an apparatus that evolved to survive a world far different from the overpopulated, so-called civilized one our tool-making ability has unleashed. I think the source of our rampant mental illness is the obvious fact that we are no longer living in the relatively simple garden that created us, and it is just too much for many if not all minds to easily wrap their heads around.

The mind is a tool, and when contemplation and meditation begin to examine that device, what it is, and all the assumptions it has made in formulating its world, its universe, things can get a bit iffy. To go all the way, to achieve a state of illumination, requires the doubt, the aloofness, of an unflinching scientist bent on truth. It is a journey which few begin, much less finish. Many are called, few are chosen, and even fewer volunteer.

* * * *

Response to a movie trailer from cousin Steve:

The Red Pill (2017)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLzeakKC6fE&feature=youtu.be

Moi: Looks interesting, but I don't have Amazon Prime, so I'll catch it when it comes out on Netflix, or maybe on Youtube if it shows up there.

The whole battle of the sexes thing is pretty much a non-issue for me at this writing. I'm no longer in the work place, feel no need to die for any nation state or belief system, am all but done with women for anything but light banter, and have absolutely no interest in joining any movement or group. I retain absolute power over my inner world, and do not require the sanction of any man or any woman to live out what's left of my existence freely, and in peace.

Along with reading some of the men's books you've previously mentioned, I gave a men’s group a short try back during the college years in Chico, and my observation with it and some other group discussion experiences, including Christian bible groups, is that they tend to process the same things over and over, and end up promoting weakness and disempowerment. And I have never been interested in being a sheep in anyone's flock.

Did you ever read "Iron John" by Robert Bly? Haven't looked at it for years, but my takeaway memory on it is that a boy must steal the key from under his mother's pillow, and never give it away to any other woman. If you do, my experience is that they will both weaken you, slow you down, and as the song goes, take your soul if you let them. Only the rare woman will ever even begin to comprehend or appreciate a man's world. From my perspective, it's a waste of time to
even bother trying to explain or justify the perception of maleness this meat machine has formulated. It doesn’t make me a misogynist; it just means the given anatomy, the given sensory play, no long hypnotizes me, no longer inspires me to dance a dance, to play a game, in which I am no longer interested.

Iron John: A Book About Men

Iron John

Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve:

Contaminants in water are legal but still pose big health risks, environmental group says

Moi: The chemistry we have unleashed across the planet in the last century or so is yet another major aspect of the unfolding nightmare for the future. The Central Valley is a toxic waste bin, and having lived in it most my life, it is a wonder I'm still on the walking side of grass. One of the top reasons I long to move further north is to get to someplace with "cleaner" air and water.

Response to an article sent by cousin Steve with a comment that he finds it ironic and hypocritical that someone is fired because he questions his company’s diversity policy:

Google Reportedly Fires Employee Who Slammed Diversity Efforts

Moi: The tyranny of political correctness.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

After Studying the Lives of 724 Men for 79 Years, Harvard Reveals the 1 Biggest Secret to Success and Happiness

Moi: Our species has made it this far because belonging to groups enabled our survival, so it makes sense at a molecular level that having close bonds would forge happier, longer lives. The trick is coming up with viable connections in this our dysfunctional, disconnected world.

* * * *
Response to an article from cousin Steve with the comment: WTF is causing this? Disillusionment with just about everything from Government, Private Sector, American Culture, Vilification of Men in General in our Culture?

Drugs, jail, video games tell tale of the lost American male

Moi: I think civilization does not work as well for men as it does for women. We were designed for a harsher world, and the one we are in now is just slavery to nothing all that interesting across the board. Knowing all I know, all I have experienced, I find it hard to imagine what I would do if I was starting over.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve and his comment: I feel so sorry for these people ... it must be soooo stressful being filthy rich ... I can't imagine the stress that must cause ... I'm so glad I don't have that problem:

I'm Rich, and That Makes Me Anxious

Moi: I have come to think that I am wealthier than Gates, Buffet, Ellison, and all the other one-percenters combined, because I have enough, and do not worry whether or not I wake up tomorrow. To master contentment is the first and last challenge.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

My wife had a baby, and I started thinking about suicide. A psychiatrist’s diagnosis surprised me.

Moi: A few thousand years ago, it was just a cave or a teepee, hang out in the forest, bring home a slab of meat, and let the kids run wild. Now it's a two-story-five-bedroom house, a monotonous mind-numbing job, parent-teacher conferences, rat dogs and yowling cats, debt up to your ears, and slavery to a woman's futile attempt to attain happiness. We're just fucking lucky that we managed to ride it out solo, cuz.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve with the comment: It's definitely a fucked up situation … but the problem isn’t the guns … although it makes it possible … but it’s the person that goes commando and flips out … and I don’t know how to fix that:

The Las Vegas shooter had 23 guns. Here’s what we know about them.
Moi: We are what we are: the planet of the apes. It's been going on since some angry primate picked up the first stick or rock. And there ain't no fixing it, that's for sure. You can't legislate sanity.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Why Loneliness Is a Public Health Threat

Moi: I think technology has made many realize how lonely they are, and stoke it as never before.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

The secret to office happiness isn’t working less – it’s caring less

Moi: Each of us has to find our own way in dealing with everyone else – parents, mates, children, bosses, coworkers, priests, politicians, one-percenter, whatever – telling us what to do or how to live. It's not easy standing alone free and clear. Never had much ambition for this or any other world, so I've managed to remain relatively detached much of this inane life. Buddha caught it with his third noble truth.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

This Map Compares the Population of the Real World vs. Social Media
https://www.visualcapitalist.com/map-populations-real-world-social-media/

Steve: It is a major contributor to the downfall of the world, and it's driving people collectively insane on a massive scale.

Moi: It's both intellectually fascinating and emotionally exhausting watching our tool-making ability take us deeper and deeper into the abyss.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

A Quantum Theory of Consciousness
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-quantum-theory-of-consciousness_us_596fb782e4b04dcef308d29bb

Moi: I, Quantum
Response to Nathan Potter on awakening to the delusion of his Catholic upbringing, and the rough waters he is enduring with his mental health:

Hey, Nathan,

I have never understood the need so many seem to have for a personal god, either, but it is, and has ever been, in my view, nothing more than a man-made concept. Anything I start to write about how it may have come about is really little more than speculation. The short list of possibilities are anchored in desire and fear, and include fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of aloneness, superstition and idolatry, groupthink, a means to control others, and a means to accumulate power, fame, and fortune.

The human mind, with all its egocentric-ethnocentric-geocentric flavors – vanity, vanity, all is vanity – does not deal well with uncertainty, so I suppose creating a god or gods, no matter how illusory, no matter how delusional, fabricates an explanation that allows individuals in any given culture to carry on in the day-to-day.

And atheism, claiming there is no god, is really just another assertion, another game of pretending to know what can never be known, as well. The other side of the same coin, so to speak.

What it boils down to is that this dream is an insoluble mystery, and to abide in a don’t-know-don’t-care agnostic state of mind, serenely wandering as detached as possible in the given moment, enjoying the solitude, the awareness within as best you can, is too challenging for most, but is, in my view, the most real approach to this long-no-matter-how-short-short-no-matter-how-long existence.

Don’t know if that helps, but that’s pretty much the gist of what I have to offer. Good luck getting a handle on it. Feel free to seek me out anytime.

Ciao, ciao,

M

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Happiness may be healthier for some cultures than others

Moi: I definitely am not, have never been, will never be, a cheerleader for anything or anyone, and I’m not unhappy about that.

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Paul Craig Roberts To The American Left: R.I.P.
Moi: All empires fall, some more quickly than others.

* * * *

Back and forth with Chuck Hooper on an article I sent, along with a quote from Thucydides, to which he responded his next book would be “Trump’s WWIII.”

Russia Is Now Providing North Korea With Internet: What That Could Mean For Cyber Warfare

Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War: It is not so much your hostility that injures us; it is rather the case that, if we were on friendly terms with you, our subjects would regard that as a sign of weakness in us, whereas your hatred is evidence of our power.

Moi: WWIII has been happening ever since WWII ended in my thinking. Trump's version is just another chapter in the long line of idiots in charge of the ongoing decline and inevitable collapse of the current Rome. History does not repeat itself, but the patterns do.

* * * *

Response to Lise Welsh's query about my health, and why I hadn't made it back up to Chico to visit friends for awhile:

At a swim party the summer after the last trip to Chico, I walloped my forehead, and got a nice little concussion that really did a number on the neck and brainstem. A fitting addition to all the lifetime issues already in place. Do not drink and dive is the moral of the story. So, anywho, since then I have spent a lot of time rehabbing in a variety of ways, including rehab, arch-supports, rolfing, somatics, kettlebells, stretching, swordplay, cardio machines, jump-rope, walking, and whatever other dynamic low-impact exercises come to mind, including a lot of playing about in the pool and spa at the Brenda Athletic Club, literally across the street from the Lakeside Apartments studio I’ve lived in for eighteen years now – Studio 101, I calls it.

The good news is that it’s all working out quite well. The concussion issues have been waylaid nicely, and I’m feeling better than I have in years. I’ll turn 64 in a few weeks, and am in pretty darned good shape compared to most men my age. But as far as travelling goes, I just haven't been in the mood to go to all the effort of packing and unpacking, and dealing with all the madness a road trip entails. Studio 101 is very close all kinds of everything commercial, as well as CSU, Stanislaus, and it’s very easy to not get in my car as much as possible anymore.

Me mum, age 88 and doing well, lives on her own in a condo in Modesto, and my plan, such as it is, is to stay in this area until she passes, and then move north, either out of Kaliforny to someplace like Eugene, or over to the coast somewhere Fort Bragg north. Need to be someplace with fewer people, more rain, and cleaner air. I was born and raised on a 30-acre peach ranch in Hughson, a small town between Modesto and Turlock. Don’t know what the population was back then, but now there are a million and a half people between Stockton and Merced, plus all the north-south traffic on Highway 99, and I’m sick to death of all the congestion, all the dust, all the toxicity of all the pesticides that have been used since WWII, as well as the Christian-
Republican-and-other-parochial-bullshit mindset that permeates the Great Central Valley … but I need to stick it out in good-son fashion so that Mom has a decent endgame. Can’t begin to express how fortunate I feel to have had such a great woman as my mother.

Sooooo … that’s the so-it-goes life-and-times of Michael in a nutshell as of 27 Oct 2017. Whoo-hoo.

* * * *

Michael Holshouser: A List of Injuries and Strains

1960’s and 70’s – Tractor driving: lower back, left arm and shoulder; heavy lifting and moving.

1957-ish – Golf club backswing to forehead, and monkey bar fall causing classmate’s tooth to cut into top of head.

1967 through 1972 – Broke left eardrum three times, resulting in skin graft to ear drum. This, coupled with driving tractor, forklifts, vehicles with open windows, and sitting too close to a few concert and nightclub speakers, worked together to cause loss of high range sounds.

1969 through 1972 – High school physical education: running, jumping, throwing, wrestling, and other boy stuff. First hemorrhoids because of lack of fiber in diet and the resulting constipation.

1969 through 1975 – High school and Sunday afternoon football; some broken knuckles and a jammed finger joint; two major memories during frosh-soph years in football practice of a block that caused a snap in lower back, and a tackle that caused severe pain to (left or right?) shoulder/collarbone.


1972 to present – Backpacking, car camping, hitchhiking with a heavy backpack in Europe.

1972 to present – Coffee, alcohol, marijuana.

1972 through 1985 – Forklifting at Joan of Arc field station and Martella’s Walnut Huller.

1975 to present – Transient working life with many moves.

1978 – Heavy lifting and moving at Weinstock’s.

1975 through 1980 – Two or three solid hits to left jaw.

1980 – Pee’d blood after prepping on cold day for calf-tying event at La Grange Rodeo.

1980’s to present – Two or three bicycle crashes.

1980’s – Carrying photography equipment for Waterford News, weddings, special events.

1980 – La Grange Rodeo calf-tying practice strain.
1981 – Motorcycle slide on asphalt on left side in light clothing.

1985 to present – Graveyard shifts and sleep deprivation: Creative Alternatives, bread-baking, Kinko’s, taxi driving.

1886 – Bicycle strain on left knee.

1989 – Wave head first into sand.

1989 to present – Gun shooting recoils and archery pulls.

1989 – Falling onto feet while tying down rack on VW van.

1989 to present – Hallucinogens and other drugs.

1990’s – Heavy lifting and moving at Sierra Stationers and Kinko’s.

1998 – Carpal tunnel syndrome disability from Kinko’s.

1999 to present – Bad posture in computer use.

2000’s – Heavy lifting and moving at Creative Alternatives.

2000 to present – A couple mild concussions after passing out tightening upper back and neck.

2008-ish – Twice hit in left eye by racquetballs, the second time causing temporary blurriness for several days.

2013-ish – Sidewalk curb slip onto left knee.

2014-ish – Rolling fall down Marriott Hotel marble stairs.

2016 – Diving concussion at summer swim party.


Life, it’ll kill ya.

* * * *

Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve:

Moi: The thing to remember about the male-female partnership is that it evolved back when we were indigenous, and suited survival in a perilous analog world. Civilization, and all its technologies and prescribed memes, have made it all but unendurable to anyone who is not willing to slave away their existence for the sake of their genetic coding.

* * * *

Comment on an article sent to Patrick Newman:

California housing crisis spurring lawmakers into action

Moi: The game of Monopoly is my go-to metaphor. In any win-lose game, there are winners, and there are losers. And, given the extremes to which human greed has played out over and over since long before any history was written, once everything's bought up, what happens to those who never even had a chance to roll the dice? Feudalism, enslavement, migration, revolt, death. It's all so inevitable.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Silicon Valley is obsessed with meditation, and there’s new evidence it changes the brain for the better

Moi: Meditation puts you in touch with the real you, with the awareness you truly are. All this identity bother is the fluff of the delusion of illusion.

* * * *

Response to an article from by Patrick Newman:

Chilean Economist Manfred Max-Neef: US Is Becoming an "Underdeveloping Nation"
https://www.democracynow.org/2010/9/22/chilean_economist_manfred_max_neef_us

Moi: You can teach trivia, you can teach regurgitation, but you can't teach critical thinking, you can't teach wisdom. How fascinating it is to have lived through the rise and decline of the most powerful nation state the world has ever, and likely will ever see again. Hoping it doesn't collapse while I'm still in the game, but oh well if it does.

* * * *

Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve:

The unknowable Stephen Paddock and the ultimate mystery: Why

Wikipedia: 2017 Las Vegas Strip shooting
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Las_Vegas_Strip_shooting
Moi: People get upset when they can't get the answers they want. Sure, it could be they'll find a brain tumor or some such thing, but I figure Paddock was just jaded and irritated with human bullshit. And instead of just quietly blowing his own head off – which he ended up doing anyway – decided to go out with a bang, get himself in the history books, and raise the bar doing it. Not something most people will want to believe, but it seems pretty clear and likely in my estimate. We're all the same monkey; the differences are in the choices we each make.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Women and Men Die of Different Causes in Middle Age

Moi: Likely a helium tank or something gunpowder-ish for me on that day when things get too bothersome to endure anymore. Will probably need to go out with a few chips on the table to assure I don't accidently get stuck in the limbo of a rest home Alzheimer's unit staring at the walls for as long as this already bothersome body carries on. What a horror show so many play out because they are afraid to let go.

* * * *

Response to a comment from Stephanie Stolt, Certified Rolfer and Somatic Experiencing Practitioner:

Stephanie Stolte
http://stephaniestolte.com

Hey, Stephanie,

When you asked at the last Rolfing session whether I meditated, I was kind of surprised, but then later realized I'd never sent you the links to all my writings online. The answer to your question is that contemplation and meditation have been the one consistent thread through my adult existence. My writing time in that timeline began after the wave injury in 1989, and at this point there are just over four thousand pages of aphorisms and essays, the most recent posted in Breadcrumbs: The Unfolding Next Round.

And then there are all the other blogs, with all sorts of other writings and whatever else has spiked my interest. I'll chain them to this one in succeeding waves.

Other than that, still happy camping with the last session. You've certainly changed up my game.

Enjoy the day.

Ciao ciao,

M
* * * *

Back and forth with Len Howard on an article I sent:

Want to live longer? Get a dog
Owning a dog could literally be saving your life. According to a new study, dog owner have a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

Len: Michael … I don't know what I would do without my two. They make me keep to a schedule...allow me to get pissed at strangers … let me worry about their health, and have given us hours of laughter. Big dogs are such a presence in the house, and they are as funny as hell. I only have one goal left, my brother, and that is to outlive them, if that's doable. The horrible pain of loss for me would be more acceptable for me going first and to have them wonder what they did to drive me away. If anyone hurt them badly, I would kill my first human … unless of course they beat me to it.

Moi: They've definitely been a part of many of our conversations, and we'll never know if you've lived as long as you have because of them, so keep on keeping on.

Len: That's the same thing I tell them … The upside of them getting slower, (as am I as well), is as we all get a bit meaner too. I think Lao Tzu should re-work the line, "One to me is pleasure and pain" … Ciao

Moi: Grumpier and grumpier, I am, I am, that's for sure. Never a human being again, I often say anymore. Assuming, of course, that there's another round, which I don't. Thanking gawd in advance.

* * * *

Response to Bruce Styles on his latest and very painful bout with the aging process:

These bodies can be real torture units, that's for sure. Don't know if it applies to your situation, but I've really found a lot of my bothers are caused by a tweaked-out skeletal structure. All the work I've done this past year with Rolfing, arch supports, diet, and a very dynamic low-impact exercise and stretching program – including a lot of low-gravity time in the pool at Club Brenda across the street – are really putting this mind-body back on track. A lot of work, and there's still plenty of snap-crackle-pop bother, but it's pretty amazing how much better I feel than this time last year. Fortunately, I've always enjoyed being in this body exercise-wise, so I am able to be relatively disciplined about the regimen I’ve created.

Insurance-wise, I retired without it, figuring/hoping I could make it to Medicare – I don't much trust the AMA for any more than cut-and-splice and medication, which I don’t much care to partake anyway – but Obamacare came along, and the IRS forced me to sign up with Covered California, which has done right by me, so far. I also get a free smartphone. Whoo-hoo for free stuff. Hopefully, Trump and his minions will continue shooting themselves in the foot for at least another couple years. If not, I always keep the helium tank and a .357 (or some such thing) within arms reach.

Anywho, off into the day. Good luck with things.
Ciao ciao,

M

* * * *
Forwarded to Gianni Grassi with the comment: All very gradual, ever-contracting and expanding in this mind, that's for sure.

Buddha at the Gas Pump
427. Panel Discussion: “Sudden or Gradual: Two Paths to Realization?”
https://batgap.com/panel-discussion-sudden-gradual-two-paths-realization/

Michael Rodriguez, Isa Gucciardi, David Buckland, Rick Archer

There is a perennial debate in spiritual traditions regarding whether realization is direct (sudden) or progressive (gradual). But is this a false distinction? Realization is often sudden, no matter how many years of practice may have led up to it, and even after realization, most people find that refinement, clarification, and the working out of personal shortcomings continue indefinitely.

Who wouldn’t prefer direct realization to years of purification and practice? But how many examples of purely direct realization can we find? Can a path be both direct and progressive? Is it possible to have a taste of our true nature from the outset, and then spend a lifetime clarifying and embodying it? Also, is there one watershed breakthrough which can be universally agreed upon as final “Realization,” or are there many degrees and stages of realization, each of them important stepping stones in a never-ending journey?

Proponents of the direct path sometimes argue that if we regard spiritual development as progressive, we will forever be anticipating, never arriving. But some spiritual seekers, not appreciating the distinction between understanding and experience, mistake intellectual understanding with enlightenment, and consider themselves “finished” when they are just getting started.

* * * *
Response to Robin Slovacek’s 64th birthday question about the influence of Jiddu Krishnmurti on my life: Happy Birthday and many, many blessings, Michael. Actually, I was going to ask you a question: Did you have a chance to listen to J. Krishnamurti in person? If so, what a wonderful experience that must have been for you.

Krishnamurti used to come to Ojai for a couple weeks of talks every year. I went down three times in the late 70's and early 80's, but never actually met him. Ended up teaching fifth-sixth grade for a couple years at the Oak Grove School in the late 80's, a few years after his death. An interesting experience – he certainly had a large impact on my life – but "wonderful" isn't a word I tend to use for such things.

He set the bar high and clear, and I've never considered following him or anyone else since, though I probably wouldn’t have anyway; it not being my nature. He wrote who knows how
many books, and there are all kinds videos available, as well. These are the books listed on my website, but anything you pick up is pretty much talking about the same things:

Think on These Things  
The First and Last Freedom  
Freedom from the Known  
The Ending of Time  
Commentaries on Living Series  
The Awakening of Intelligence  
Education and the Significance of Life

Jiddu Krishnamurti  

Oak Grove School  

Krishnamurti Foundation of America  
https://kfa.org

Introduction to the Teachings  
https://kfa.org/introduction-teachings/

Complete Collection  
http://beta.jkrishnamurti.org

Store  
https://store.kfa.org

The 64th was a most excellent day ... Thanks for the good wishes ... Hope all is well.

* * * *
Response to Raphael Tyszkiewicz’s 64th birthday comment on my Facebook timeline page:  
Happy BE Day Michael! ... Thank You for your creativity ... I read your works, enjoy a lot ... and duplicate.

Hey, Raphael,

Saw your comment on my Facebook page, and just wanted say that I'm pleased you've found all my babble interesting. Thought I'd make sure you've got all the links to everything posted, including the PDF's. Well over four thousand pages, so far, and more popping into mind many if not most daze.

Everything written this year is posted in "Breadcrumbs: The Unfolding Next Round" at the link below. For some unknown reason, Blogger hasn't let me upload anything since October 11th, but I'm sure it will work out sooner or later.
Feel free to pass anything on to anyone you think might have mind for it.

Regards,

M

Website

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

Main Blogs

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com/

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/

PDF's

The Stillness Before Time (53 pages)

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim (505 pages)

The Return to Wonder (3006 Pages)
(Major edit underway – New copy colored blue)
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/thereturntowonder.pdf

Breadcrumbs (1548 pages)

Breadcrumbs 2018 (600 Pages)

Breadcrumbs 2019 (161 Pages)
(First Six Months of 2019 – Look for final copy in early 2020)
In less than a month, I will be 64-years old. I began driving a tractor on our small family farm in Hughson when I was eight, and swimming in the canal across the road by the time I was nine, and have lived a hard physical working and playing life ever since. There have been myriad injuries of every sort in all arenas - head, eyes, neck, back, pelvis, arms, hands, legs, feet, you name it – and I have explored a variety healing techniques, including chiropractic, massage, acupressure, acupuncture, rehabilitation, medication, and a few others whose names I have forgotten. Many eyes have witnessed this mind-body, and all of them have helped keep it in the game, but none have accomplished the integrated restructuring that Stephanie Stolte has managed since I first contacted her in February earlier this year. Her gentle but firm hands have gradually peeled away bother after bother in this tip-to-stern, injury-laden bag of bones and flesh and goo. Things that I never would have dreamed to not be enduring anymore. Every day I wake up freer and freer of chronic pain and limitation, and am moving more and more fluidly – and with more balance and flexibility and dexterity and strength – than I have in who knows how many moons.

Healing, whether in body or mind or spirit, can be a long and winding process. There is no rewind button, and to expect any practitioner to cast a fix in one session would not be realistic. Stephanie has an intuitive awareness of the many dimensions and interrelationships within all things. Her ongoing studies in a variety of schools of thought, including Rolfing, Cranial Sacral, Somatics, Reiki, Sourcepoint, and human psychology in general – along with her innate ability to draw me into a partnership in my own healing – have all contributed to my being able to play out whatever time is left in a rejuvenated state of health and well-being that I never believed I would
enjoy again. As I stated above, I have known many healers in my efforts to deal with all the
issues that have racked this temporal container since those youthful daze in the peach orchards
and swimming holes, and I rate Stephanie high among them. Her already sizable, ever-
expanding repertoire regarding the human mind and body, coupled with her wisdom, her
intuitive, empathetic, holistic grace, has transformed this old guy existence in ways for which I
am forever grateful.

Namaste,
Michael Holshouser

Rolfing
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolfing

Craniosacral Therapy
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craniosacral_therapy

Somatics
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somatics

Reiki
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reiki

Sourcepoint Therapy
http://sourcepointtherapy.com/about/

* * * *

A Christmas story idea back in the 70’s – after reading J.R.R. Tolkein’s “The Hobbit” and “Lord
of the Rings,” and playing an old school board game version of Dungeons & Dragons – passed
on freely to a variety of possible writers, illustrators, and screenwriters through the years that
never made it off the ground. This was the latest summary. Maybe someday, somebody will do
something with it. No need to thank me.

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December 25, 2015

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS … IN A NOW NOT TOO FAR AWAY …

Santa’s evil twin brother steals the magic indivisibility ring, the magic shrinking-present bag,
and all the presents, a week before Christmas, and takes everything down to his dark fortress at
the South Pole. The story begins showing the joy of yet another year of the North Pole crew
happily putting it all together, and then one morning, a week before the big night, everything is
gone. No one knows where. The boy elf overhears Santa telling his wife about his evil brother
for the first time, and that he doesn’t know what to do. Santa is bedridden by depression, and
everything comes to a standstill. The boy elf pulls together crew of friends, and sets out to save
Christmas. After a convoluted and dangerous journey, against all odds, and down to the wire, the victorious fellowship returns to the North Pole just in time to save Christmas.

dragon (how the North Pole stays warm)
magic indivisibly ring (how Santa travels simultaneously through time and space)
magic shrinking-present bag (how Santa carries all the presents)

boy elf
girl elf
son of Rudolph
young dragon
grinch
elf
dwarf
fairy
owl
mouse
cricket

Santa’s evil twin brother
witch wife
evil son and daughter
wizard brother-in-law
dragons
wolves
trolls
orcs
rats
bats
flying monkeys

* * * *

Response to being blocked on Facebook by longtime online friend, Sandra Heber-Percy, a.k.a. Sandra Ma, who was born in Italy, but left her family to be a sannyasi in India many moons ago. I had been posting some things on her Facebook wall that she felt would upset many of her less-awakened acquaintances. Many of them are in the “devotion stage, or kindergarten of dos and don'ts,” she wrote. “Sandra has to be careful.” In our back and forth she stated that there are periods of life in which those awakening try to awaken others. “I had my period 15 years back; now I am too old to try and tickle the world with Truth more than mildly as a pastime.”

Moi: I'm probably a little more wild than I should be on my side of the world. Expecting to get shot any day now by some Christian zealot for all my blaspheme about the Son of Santa Claus. That or some dull, rusty knife-work by the Muslim version of true-believership. We awaken at our own peril.

Truth goes well with my morning coffee shop time. And after saving the world an average of at least three times over with other regulars of many persuasions that haphazardly stop by, I retire to my hammock, a few chores, some food, and later to the club across the street for a mild

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workout and swim, followed by more food and a movie. I usually share an afternoon or evening meal, and maybe a movie or sporting match, with me almost 88-year-old Mum at least once a week. Through it all, occasionally jotting down the ditty or three that spontaneously pop into mind for the next day's coffee klatsch. About 150 pages so far this year, largely unread and unknown, which, as you well understand, is all right by me. It’s all so passé anymore, anyway. So, pleasantly bored, I am, abiding this world until it has had its fill of me, and finally lets me go home.

The Unfolding Next Round
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_52.html

* * * *
Betty Goesch of East Pine Street on my childhood penchant for cookies and water faucets:

The first seven years of my childhood were spent in a newly-built G.I. Bill three-bedroom home on East Pine Street, at the time a twelve-house cul-de-sac in Hughson, California. There is little to tell of those early years before we moved out to the thirty-acre peach ranch on Hatch Road, but two anecdotes shared by Betty Goesch, a neighbor in the house at the corner of Pine and 7th Streets, stand out. The first is that at some point I wandered around and turned on all the faucets on the block. The second was that my mother would occasionally take me down to Betty’s for a morning coffee klatch. Betty would always have cookies and milk, and I must have been somewhat vocal about asking for them before they were offered, because Betty says my mother told me not to ask anymore. My response, according to Betty was to enter her house, take a sniff, and announce that it “sure smells like cookies.” Nothing remarkable, but mildly amusing that the rascal-rogue-cad-rake-blackguard-scalawag-scoundrel-reprobate-ne'er-do-well nature was evident at such an early age, nonetheless.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Former Facebook executive Chamath Palihapitiya: "You don't realize it, but you are being programmed"

Moi: Nothing new, methinks. Technology has always shaped our minds. We can't help ourselves. The clock is a great example. Did time exist before them hands started spinning in our heads? Consumption and propaganda: over-the-counter-in-the-isles-within-every-screen soma. Huxley caught it in Brave New World, and Orwell in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm. Some wake up; most don't. We're not as superior as we like to believe. Oh well, so it goes, deal with it, get over it, move on. Not our world for much longer, so no worries.

Steve: The invention of the clock wasn't intentionally designed to dick to you into looking at it. What's insidious and sinister about it is that corporations are manipulating people through tapping into that best thing to do is not use any of that shit

* * * *
Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve:

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Having a high IQ is a curse ... just look at Donald Trump

Moi: Have never taken an IQ test, and I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be all that high at this writing the way this brain is dealing with all that's been done to in the last 64 years: concussions; alcohol, drugs, and caffeine; pesticides, preservatives, hormones, and medications; gun solvents and lead residue, under-the-kitchen sink who-knows-what; circadian rhythm and sleep deprivation issues; early stages of dementia, Alzheimer's, and who-knows-what-other aging issues; philosophical malaise; et cetera, et cetera.

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

Why The World Is Getting Better And Why Hardly Anyone Knows It

Steve: So this article is predicating the statement that the world is getting better up on the fact that there's fewer people starving etc etc what it's not taking into account is that the world I either Earth is not itself any better it's going to hell in a hand basket because we're destroying it it's like saying that a train that has luxury food and sleeping compartments on it that's headed for Cliff is getting better because everybody's having a good time but when we get to the cliff we're fucked

Moi: I think the human drama can be synthesized into a very simple fact: Everything we do is about endorphins. Relationships, sex, food, drink, drugs, entertainment, power, fame, fortune, work, play, art, games, sports, war, et cetera ad infinitum. We are quantum-chemical-biological patterns, and feeling good is a huge piece of our survival mechanism. Some are naturally "happy" much of the time, and others inordinately "sad" much of the time. Most of us, of course, cross to and fro as ebb and flow dictates. To become master of one's patterned make-up in this sensory play is the challenge.

As challenging and wearing and exasperating as it is, the fascinating thing about living in this time is that we get to watch a fair portion or both the rise and fall of a modern Rome, as well as witness at least part of the inevitable crash and burn of the human cancer and all its vanities. Drag to see the world be undone so badly, but Gaia doesn't give a hoot about its anything – creation, preservation, and destruction are equal dynamics in this dreamtime – so why should we?

* * * *
Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent:

The ages people are happiest with their money, their looks, and life

Happiness ... Sorrow ... Pleasure ... Pain .. What is they anyway? ... How preoccupied we are
with the ever waxing and waning ephemeral states of mind ... Pffft on all of it ... Change is ... So it goes, deal with it, get over it, move on.

Steve: I also don't think you can generalize like they did ... being 60 and comfortable vs. 60 and homeless are two different things ... 

Moi: Writers and talking heads filling space with mind gorp to get a paycheck.

** * * *
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Former Facebook Executive Antonio Garcia Martinez Predicts Collapse Of Civilization Within 30 Years

Moi: He is much more optimistic than I.

** * * *
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

PhD students have double the risk of developing a psychiatric disorder than the rest of the 'highly educated' population
http://www.businessinsider.com/phd-students-could-face-significant-mental-health-problems-2017-8

Moi: It just does not pay to be either too smart or too stupid in this insane asylum. Learn to breathe in, breathe out, I say, and let go what does not matter, which by my middle-way reckoning at this writing, is a fair portion of all of it.

** * * *
Response to cousin Steve's sending the links to books on the competition between men and women:

The Red Pill
http://theredpillmovie.com/

The Myth of Male Power
http://www.warrenfarrell.org/

Who Stole Feminism?

Moi: We will see how powerful women are when things really go down. The duplicity of civilization's political correctness allows them to pretend they are more than they are, more than they ever can be. Let them pretend, I say, let them have all the rope they want, and see what they do when the noose rests about their pretty little necks, and the boys their mothers bred are too

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impotent to pry it off.

Who builds the roads and bridges and buildings and dams? Who mines the coal or mans the oil rigs? Who lifts and carries the heavy loads? Who fights the wars? And on and on and on. Women are good at stirring froth and nurturing the young, but it is men who bend steel, carve wood, tunnel into the earth, and fend off the beast.

* * * *

Back and forth with cousin Steve on an article I sent with the comment: Yeah … I saw this … My thought after reflecting on it is … that we’re all the walking dead now … and aren’t even aware of it … so the people who did this research are missing the point:

When you die you know you are dead: Major study shows mind still works after the body shows no signs of life

Moi: Just a collection of molecules pretending to be alive.

* * * *

Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve, who suffers from CFS:

Scientists Edge Closer To Elusive Lab Test For Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/07/31/540565526/scientists-edge-closer-to-elusive-lab-test-for-chronic-fatigue-syndrome

Moi: The trouble with science is that many so-called scientists are often unable to grasp there are some things that cannot be easily measured, or may be completely immeasurable, but that does not mean something is not real. Sometimes the question, the hypothesis, is not large or small enough for the answer. The true scientist never assumes a final conclusion.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Smartphones making teens isolated, immature, suicidal

Moi: The reality is that we are all ultimately very much alone. Our tribal instincts, our socialization as a species is nothing more than evolutionary wiring. The challenge is to realize it at such a level as to be alone, not lonely. It is a sovereign state of mind that does not dread solitude.

* * * *

Response to an article from Ninos David:

Greece: A (Basket) Case Study In Savage Globalization
Moi: The irony, of course, is that it was the Greeks – Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Herodotus, Athens, Sparta, Alexander – that set Western Civilization in motion, and began the conquest and colonization of the world by taking down Persia and Egypt. Yet for the Greeks to think they are more disenfranchised than anyone else is absurd. Across the world, billions of people are living out harsh lives with no hope of ever freeing themselves from the chains of powerlessness, of despair and futility, created by the inherent violence of greed. “Poor me, poor us” will be an echo across the world for the rest of human history. And as for the violence, I suspect we have only scratched the surface of the horrors this century and beyond will witness.

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Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Is Marriage Improving Your Health?
https://newsstand.google.com/articles/CAIiEJSFZKcrmPjsms1xCfb_7SwqFggEKg4IACoGCAo

Moi: Define health.

And what of happiness?

My observation of married men is that they live in a state of trepidation: "Let me see what the wife thinks" or "I don't think the wife would like that." or "Let me see if the wife has anything planned." And why is it so many practically live out in their garage?

Marriage might work for many men, but I have no doubt I am much healthier and happier flying solo. Can't tell you how many have said to me, "You're lucky."

* * * *

Back and forth with Sarlo regarding his guru rating service website:

Sarlo's Guru Rating Service

Howdy Ekim,

The wheels of Guru Ratings grind slow these days but I've got around to listing you today, on my Literature page at http://www3.telus.net/public/sarlo/RatingsL.htm, and the New Listings page and alphabetical listings lead there.

Best Wishes on your continued sojourning, Sarlo

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Sarlo,

Your website, grind that I can understand it being by now, has always been an enjoyable wander, and I thought it would be amusing to at least get an honorable mention in the rankings of absurdity, so thanks. Can't say I'm much of a guru/philosopher in any sort of big way by any
means. Life just sort of gradually shaped this mind into the thinker/writer zone, and for the last 25 years it has been something of a hobby to scribble down the ditties that always seem to pop into mind in the here and there. Not at all interested in setting up an ashram or creating some traveling salvation show. Way too many doing the glossy marketing thing already by my reckoning, and not always to right purpose as you have many times pointed out. Plus I value anonymity and solitude way too much to give it up for all the bother of wandering stages, hawking books, and comforting the weepy. So, silly as it all is in this vanity faire, putting it out there no-charge on the web in these-our-modern-times has been the obvious compromise.

Thanks for doing what you do. Keep on keeping on as best ye may.

Best wishes,

M

The Stillness Before Time
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/

Main Blogs

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com/

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/

The Return to Wonder
http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/

PDF's

The Stillness Before Time (53 pages)

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim (505 pages)

The Return to Wonder (3006 Pages)
(Major edit underway – New copy colored blue)
http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/thereturntowonder.pdf

Breadcrumbs (1548 pages)

Breadcrumbs 2018 (600 Pages)
Hey, hey, Sarlo,

Another round of silliness coming at you. Two score and fifteen-ish pages parlayed into five chapters, all posted in Breadcrumbs: Leftovers I, Leftover II (One-Liners), Possible Titles, Corollaries, and Possible Last Words & Epitaphs. Randomly pick thoughts from the two Leftover sections are being used to wrap the “Ponderings of Yaj Ekim” book that I’ve been slowly putting together. Am aiming for 501 pages, 480 already uploaded. Eventually, there will a downloadable PDF on the website, and maybe a self-published version with an ISBN number for sale on Amazon if I get to it.

Breadcrumbs
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/

Enjoy the day.

M

P.S. This for you from the Corollaries section:

Sarlo:
Effing the Ineffable.
Yaj Ekim’s Corollary:
Effing away.

And from Possible Titles:
The Halls of Sarlo

P.P.S. Feel free to tell me to stop if you're not into getting these random dittyfests. One of these daze maybe I'll just turn off the faucet, but for now it is, as I said before, an interesting pastime.

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Howdy Mike,

Thanks in return for your enjoyable replies and the link. Calling what you "do" a hobby (sans horse of course) looks like a detached but useful perspective and yes, it's good to "give something back" to the whole. Nice that you've found that balance.

Namaste, Sarlo

* * * *
Response to Ronald Arrington's "Today's Daily Scripture" on unmasking Lucifer's tricks and lies:

I am awareness, alone and absolute. The dualistic notions of gods and devils, good and evil, right and wrong, and all the other countless fear-ridden concoctions of human consciousness, of human imagination, are not a reality for me.

But thanks for sharing.

Enjoy the day.

Ciao ciao,

M

* * * *
Response to an article from cousin Steve:

The Uninhabitable Earth

Moi: Yet another round of mental masturbation that concludes with the pitiful, absurdly delusional four-letter H-word: Hope.

Even if everyone woke up to climate change – which they're not going to do – and made some heroically significant changes to their lifestyle and breeding practices – which they're not going to do – and all the one-percenters and their minions set aside their greed – which they're not going to do – and all the politicians and lobbyists and donors stopped being corrupt and happily worked together – which they're not going to do – and all the nation states across the world
turned off their war machines – which they're not going to do – and scientists and technicians and industrialists managed to close the freezer door – which they're not going to do ... and on and on and on ... ad infinitum.

In other words, the dystopian reckoning is coming, so keep your powder dry, and make sure you save one bullet.

* * * *

Comment on an article sent to cousin Steve:

There’s a dark side to meditation that no one talks about
https://qz.com/993465/theres-a-dark-side-to-meditation-that-no-one-talks-about/

Moi: To me the meditative, contemplative life, is a solo act. I don't do groups unless a paycheck is involved. Too much bullshit anytime you hook up with anything organized.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Humans Are Genetically Predisposed to Kill Each Other
http://rdouglasfields.com/2016/10/humans-genetically-predisposed-kill/

Moi: No boubt adout it in my mind. It is only because of consequences (e.g., San Quentin) that a fair number of people are still alive in my trail of existence. I am a natural born killer who chooses not to.

Revenge has a long memory, I always say. I suspect the trick to not getting caught carrying out any act of passion, is setting aside the passion, and coming up with a solid plan that includes things like no smoking gun, no fingerprints, no DNA, an alibi, and plausible deniability. There are a fair share of perfect crimes committed daily by those who give it careful thought. Politicians and bankers and bureaucrats are first and foremost examples.

* * * *

Response to Patrick Newman regarding his advocacy for the homeless in Chico:

Moi: I admire that you are willing to put yourself in the line of fire, and though I'm plenty ornery, I've never enjoyed being on stage, much less walking around on it with a target on my back. Besides which, there are just too many friggin' issues to pick just one, and there is no happy ending to any of them in this eye. I’m frankly just too fried with the human drama, my bullshit included, to want to spend a lot of time caring anymore. Except for the occasional spontaneous, anonymous act – I don’t do tax deductions – my words are about as involved as I get. Very few read them, and that's all right by me. Trump and the Kardashians can have all limelight that the world so willingly gives them.

Breadcrumbs: The Unfolding Next Round
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_52.html

* * * *
Response to Patrick Newman on the human paradigm:

Moi: It's been interesting being a human being, but I won't miss us.

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Response to a Youtube video from Jeremiah Fair:

Richard Rohr: Becoming Stillness
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TGS-JD80nE

Moi: Just finished listening to the Richard Rohr clip. Definitely makes some interesting points, but his talking about the timeless stillness, the formless indivisibility of the mystery within and without, left me as always wondering why anyone who grasps the irony and paradox of it all, would ever need to believe in any god, ever need to belong to any religion, ever need to pray for any this or that, or ever need to partake in any idolatry of thought or form. Surely, the fearlessness, the absoluteness, the indelible grace, of the timeless awareness, the eternal nowness prior to consciousness, is more than enough for anyone who has discerned the mystery firsthand.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

How Loneliness Begets Loneliness

Moi: Good article, well worth passing on, but not a major issue for me. Ultimately, from my perspective we're all very much alone, so the trick is to discern the grace in being "alonely." I've always been a self-sufficient sociable loner – being raised on a farm no doubt played a big part in learning to enjoy my solitude – and it's generally been relatively easy to chatter away with friends, acquaintances, and strangers. Hanging out at coffee shops and the gym offer all kinds of regular interactions, and my philosophical view and writing, as well as all the online silliness, have provided outlets, as well. "To have friends, you have to be a friend," is a line I heard years ago, and it has served me well.

* * * *

Response to Bart Marshall about his current projects, and how I started writing:

Moi: It's been a few years since I read the Bhagavad Gita, so I'll be looking forward to it. Spent some time this morning reading up on the other thinkers you mentioned. Though I hadn't heard of J.J. van der Leeuw, I'm familiar with the Theosophical Society and Krishnamurti, who was one of the early influences in the post-college era. I attended a few of his talks in Ojai in the late 70's, and taught 5th grade a couple years at Oak Grove School after his death in the late 80's. During the second year I finally hit the world-weary wall, and that, coupled with a concussion and fellow teacher giving me a copy of Nisargadatta's "I Am That," reset the course into seer-mode and all the many adventures and writings since.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on the state of things:
Moi: We're all slaves to one thing or another in this sorry-ass one-percenter world, and many if not most are far lower on the totem pole than you or I.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Third Way Man: How Your Soul Dies
http://thirdwayman.com/letters/how-your-soul-dies.php

Moi: INFINITE MOTIVATION for only $10! Step right up, folks! Step right up!

Thanks for sharing, but I don't think I'm one of the chosen few. I've had plenty of fire-in-the-belly times, plenty of most-excelling adventures, plenty of creation-preservation-destruction moments, for my purpose. Don't feel the need to be inspired any more. Don't need or want to care that much. Don't need or want to pretend there's something to hope for in the dark clouds we both see forming much closer than the horizon. Guess you could say I’m feeling more than a little done with our kind. I wish everyone well, but I’m over us. Good luck to the progeny who've got more years to face, more "skin in the game" than you and I, is all I have to offer.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Is the Universe Conscious? Prominent Scientists Say Yes

Moi: I tend to differentiate awareness and consciousness; awareness being the same timeless empty-infinite in all sentient life forms, and consciousness being the thought, the movement, the noise, the sense of time in each individual mind. We think ourselves separate, but in reality we are all ultimately very much the same eternal mystery.

* * * *

Response to Ninos David's comment: We are living in very strange times, and among very strange and dangerous creatures, which are conducive to mental health issues.

Moi: Destiny is all, and we've both seen and done plenty in our little window of time. All we have left to do is stay vigilant, locked and loaded, and watch and wait as our fate plays out. The challenge in whatever time is left is to maintain the best quality of life the body and mind allow.

* * * *

Response to Patrick Newman on Christianity and history:

Moi: Two thousand years and counting, I always say. The joke is on us that we allow history from thousands of years ago to steer this our modern world. Boggling.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve on computers and technology:
Moi: I long for the simplicity and tranquility of Old School. What a blessing it was to wander about alone and unburdened by the weight of the world in all the many screens.

* * * *

Response to Berj Moosekian regarding the Buddha quest:

Moi: Was thinking after you left, that the Buddha quest is less about consciousness experiencing something more-more-more, than it is simply being free of a sense of identity, free of all the conditioning, free of all the delusion, free of all the inanity, free of all the weight of pretending to be a human being. It is simply about being the awareness, unchained, at peace in the given moment.

* * * *

Response to an article from cousin Steve:

Stress really is killing us
https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/flip.it%2FtwHtKd-stress-really-is-killing-us/f-65fb99311b%2Fcnn.com

Moi: Pretty astounding what hells our minds can create. Just started Year Eight in my zen-guy retirement on April 1st. Still feel some of the angst of the working world, but not near what goes on for you and all the folks in Silicon Valley. I think being raised the son of a poor white farmer in a small rural town created far fewer expectations than you felt in your domain. I tried to play the ambition game, but never really had the fire in the belly to take it far.

* * * *

Response to Cliff McFelter regarding Donald Trump’s rise to power:

Moi: You’ve ranted well everything I’ve been thinking. It's just too fucking crazy for words. And me in Turlock, surround by Trumpites. Some friendships are definitely getting stretched. This must be how many looked at Hitler and Mussolini in their rise to power. How long Trump will last has got to be a bet in Las Vegas. Who knows, teflon-coated as he is, he may even get through this four years, and go for eight. The foolishness, the stupidity of our electorate leaves all possibilities on the table. It just shows the failure of our educational system that the memes of ignorance are as strong, if not stronger than ever.

* * * *

Response to cousin Steve regarding detachment:

Moi: I've come to see it all as a ceaseless rolodex of irony and paradox for everyone at every level in every way. And I well know how hard it is to play the detached game when you're swimming with sharks in the deep end. In his bid for enlightenment and inner peace, Siddhartha, who could have been a warrior king, chose to be a deadbeat dad, living homeless in forests and parks, playing god to a court of jesters. Not a role for which most have aptitude, much less aspiration. And really just another facet in the vanity-vanity-all-is-vanity of it all.

* * * *

To Whom It May Concern:
It is certainly a curious thing to have gone this mystical direction in life. Most definitely a road less traveled. As far as discussing it with others goes, I think, as with any specialty, any sphere—science, mathematics, music, sports, business, politics, et cetera ad infinitum—that we all tend to search out like minds to focus on our interests and passions. Scientists with scientists, mathematicians with mathematicians, musicians with musicians, athletes with athletes, businessmen with businessmen, politicians with politicians, et cetera ad infinitum. Our little “lost” tribe of seers, being somewhat scattered about the globe, are not always easy to run across. You just never know who will be sitting next to you in some coffee shop, bar, or park bench.

Personally, I have always been generalist and chameleon enough to enjoy chatting with whoever about whatever comes up. There is great freedom in anonymity. Many people I know quite well have very little if any clue about what I have done or what I have written. It has just never come up. I may probe and plant seeds, but do not worry whether or not they take root. Some minds are fertile; some are barren. It is just the way it is.

As far as staying connected with family, friends, and acquaintances goes, we each have to decide what is important to us, and it may be for some that burning bridges and moving on alone is only option they allow themselves. The high school class of my small rural town origin celebrated our 40th reunion a few years back, and those who came had a great time reconnecting and sharing their life journeys. Very few of them would ever be at all interested in my thoughts on things—many of them are true believers in one dogma or another—and I am okay with that. No point beating yourself over the head over things you cannot change.

The big view of it is that I am one of who knows how many awakened eyes in this magical mystery tour, as likely are you if you are reading this. Whether anyone else hears the call is something over which none of us has any say. Nor does it really matter. We may point the way to a larger vision, but it is each, abiding in their own set of capacities and limitations, who must, to whatever degree, wander the pathless land very much alone. We are but ephemeral seed crystals, of our own devices, for consciousness to do with what it will.

Everything I have written since 1989, except for a couple notebooks that were lost, along with a few other oopsie moments on the computer, is my gift to the future, such as it is. It is up to you and others I have befriended through the years to pass it on if you deem it to have merit. It has been an interesting pastime to give so much of my time over to it: to think it, to scribble it, to transcribe and edit it, to throw it about like Johnny did apple seeds. There may be in the neighborhood of five thousand pages worth by the time I exit this center stage. And what happens to it is for time to tell. I leave it to you to decide.

Best wishes to all, and no worries, I say, I say.

M

P.S. Regarding the name Yaj Ekim ... It is just a reverse spelling on the first and middle names ... Michael Jay Holshouser ... Mike Jay ... Yaj Ekim. Coincidently, make of it what you will, Yaj is an Indian boy’s name meaning worshipper, sacrifice, another name for Shiva, a sage. And Ekim is a Turkish name for October meaning “sowing” (of seeds).
Yaj:
Indian boy’s name
Worshipper, Sacrifice, Another name for Shiva, A sage

Ekim:
Turkish name for October
Turkish origin, meaning “sowing” (of seeds)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_months

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Th-th-th-that's all, folks.
Until the next round.

FIN