

Timeline

The Past

My present existence began as the first of four children, born on July 13, 1946 in the county of Jackson, Michigan. I have always had pretty fair recall and my fondest memories are those of the lavish attention and affection I received from my mother's extended family of aunts, uncles and adult cousins. For the first four years of my life my mother and I lived with her parents in a large multi-family home in Berkeley, California. My father, at the time, was attending the Ringling Brothers School of Art in Sarasota, Florida. Leaving that environment to live in the tiny frame house built by my father in rural Michigan was viewed as a significant personal loss for which I never quite forgave my parents until after reaching adulthood.

As a young child I attended a one-room schoolhouse through the ninth grade. There were about thirty or so kids ages 5 to 15, one teacher and no plumbing. The teacher drove a car to the schoolhouse but students all walked. I recall one teacher returning me to home after she found me standing on the center line of the rural road between my home and the school playing traffic cop one winter morning.

In that one-room schoolhouse environment I developed an appetite for learning. I don't recall there being any specific curriculum or even text books. Learning was self-paced and often included the daily subjects my older peers were addressing. Early on, I learned that using a dictionary and other reference resources brought more immediate answers than could be provided by either my teachers or parents. A traveling bookmobile from the county library provided, by a wide margin, most of my early learning resources.

In 1960, the township passed a bond issue to build a new consolidated high school which was completed the next year. With the opening of the new high school came a structured curriculum and 90 or so new peers in my graduating class alone. I did not adjust well to the environment, but buried myself in academics, maintaining a 4.0 grade average, garnering an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, and a four-year tuition scholarship at Michigan State University.

My life got very complicated the summer before my senior high-school year. The romantic in me wanted to sail the oceans wide. This was less about traveling to far away places than an acute ache to be on the water. I believed a practical solution would be to enlist in the U.S. Navy but my father would hear none of it and insisted that I solicit an appointment to Annapolis. Believing my chances of success were somewhere between slim and none I humored him. To my chagrin, I received a telegram one morning in January 1961 from one of our state representatives announcing my appointment. Undisclosed to my father, I declined the appointment. My father was livid when he learned after the fact that I had declined the honor and thus began a long term estrangement with my immediate family which was not resolved until I was nearly forty years old.

For reasons afore mentioned, I solicited my maternal grandmother, who had been my closest ally since birth, to allow me to live with her in California to complete my remaining six months of high-school. Ahh . . . warm winter weather (she now lived in

the San Joaquin Valley), sympathetic aunts, uncles and 2nd cousin peers with a ready made circle of friends. I thought that I had arrived in heaven. My father thought that I had gone to hell.

Some weeks before my high-school graduation, I received a four-year tuition scholarship from Michigan State University for which I had previously applied at my father's insistence. Elderly wisdom prevailed, and I reluctantly returned to Michigan to enroll for college. University life did not fit my romantic dreams of oceans deep and far away places. After two terms, I resigned to follow my dream and relocated to San Francisco, California where I hired on as an ordinary seaman for American President Lines. Again, I thought I was in heaven (and my father thought I had gone to hell).

After a few years on the water, the novelty of a seaman's life faded and I settled in Los Angeles, California for a few more rather unremarkable years. On one of my frequent card-playing trips to Las Vegas I was offered a job dealing poker with the Four Queens Hotel and Casino early in 1974. Having no better immediate options, I accepted their offer. Fourteen years later I reported for work only to find that the Four Queens had permanently closed their poker room without notice and found myself among the unemployed. For someone like me without a college degree and never having entertained any serious career aspirations it seemed that I could do no better than find another poker dealing job. I went to work for the newly rebuilt MGM Grand Hotel and Casino on opening night a year later.

My father and I reconciled our differences in 1985. In the ensuing years before his unexpected death in 1998 we paid each other one or two visits each year. Of these, the most memorable were two sailing vacations off the coast of Southern California/Mexico and one on Penobscot Bay in Maine. I had taken up recreational sailing to satisfy my recurring ache to be on the water some years before our reconciliation.

My domestic partner of twenty years passed in 1994. Afterwards, I sold our home in Las Vegas, Nevada and enrolled in a computer science program at Boulder Community College at Boulder, Colorado. Concurrently, I completed my Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer certification. I did a short stint with Hewlett Packard in their Loveland, Colorado call center while in Colorado. My tenure was just long enough to confirm that I was not cut out for the corporate world.

With my father's passing in 1998 I relocated to Polk County, North Carolina to assist with the dead and dying. My mother had passed a few years earlier but my father's mother was still living. Within weeks of relocating to Polk County, I hung out my 'computer technician' shingle which brings this timeline to my present existence.

The Present

In any new venture, it is helpful to begin in an area where you are able to lay claim to another's good name. This has certainly been the case with my Polk County venture. My father, after his retirement in 1985, performed many volunteer and community service activities and as a result was highly respected in the community. Doors were

opened for me that might not have been without my Fairchild name. Happily, I am now able to stand on my own good name.

My home office business began with offering computer repair and LAN administrative services. As I added application skills to my toolbox my business grew to include database and web development. Early on, I additionally taught computer and application skills at Isothermal Community College in their continuing education program.

In August 2008 I contracted with Herrmann International as their primary IT technician and have since become a full time employee. For twenty years Herrmann has been known as an assessment provider but they are increasingly moving toward becoming a human resources solution provider. With several international affiliate offices, remote sales associates, multiple web sites, on-line learning and co-branded products with fortune 500 companies, their need for integrated IT solutions is great. I do pretty much anything asked of me.

The Future

I am ready for change. The romantic in me again wants to travel and my spiritual and creative aspirations are grossly neglected due to the everyday demands of work and clients. Fifteen hour days are not uncommon for me.

I am looking forward to retirement from the IT world and embarking on a renewed spiritual journey. Of particular interest to me, are Eastern and indigenous native spiritual practices. Tibet would be my first choice for first hand learning and experience but the current policy of China makes realization of that choice unlikely. My second choice is an extended visit to South America to see what I can learn from or of native shamanism. A distant third choice is Scotland due to a gut level affinity, similar to my recurring ache to be on the water, for its geographical location. My Scottish ancestry causes me to wonder whether or not there is such a thing as cellular memory (and emotions) in my DNA.

Agreements with my two Corgi's, ages 10 and 11, currently prevent me from making any immediate travel plans. Were it not for them, I would sell, give away or store all of my worldly possessions and begin my journey today with nothing more than an I Pod, the shirt on my back and (maybe) a new Mac Air.

Prior agreements aside, I am avoiding any and all new long term agreements or commitments. Additionally, I have been steadily whittling down my worldly possessions to a manageable level by assigning ownership and/or possession to others while refusing to add to my collection. I find these actions alone to be liberating in the extreme.

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Mill Spring, NC