

Sharing Ice Cream

August 2020

New Normal, Alberta

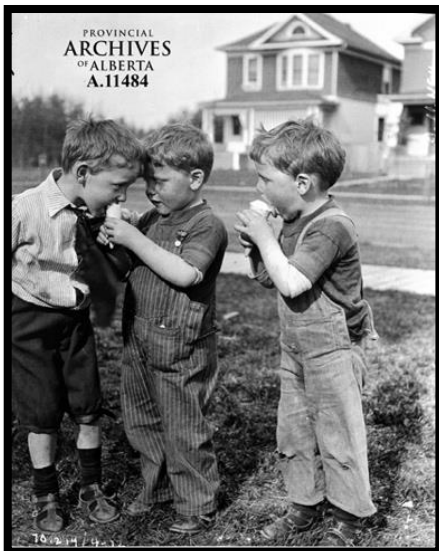
Last spring, in the early days of the Covid outbreak, I wrote a series of journals chronicling the effects of 52 days in isolation. I subjected you, my friends, family, and co-workers to those scribbles and received enough positive feedback to embolden me to continue writing during those two shut-in months. I thank you for that.

I stopped writing and distributing *Day Zero, a Dissertation on Isolation* in early May. By then, the concept of *isolation* had evolved from complete segregation, to a complex set of techniques and physical barriers that allowed us to resume most aspects of our lives, on an altered basis. We emerged from our hiding places and applied what we had learned in isolation to living with the disease.

The meme that emerged to describe the circumstances under which we now live is ***New Normal***.

While “normal” would imply that there is universal understanding of the methods and limitations required to coexist with the disease, nothing could be further from reality. ***New Normal*** is as diverse as the individuals it affects. People being people, the rules of personal conduct during Covid 19 vary greatly.

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I have had several requests for an encore to *Day Zero*, so I have decided to write and distribute a series of journals on life in the shadow of a pandemic. The articles are written with the sole intent of entertainment. If they give readers another perspective from which to measure and design their own parameters for living in altered circumstances that would be a bonus.

The journals that follow are creative imaginings, based upon events occurring in the life of Bear and I, many set in the fictional town of New Normal, Alberta.

Three residents of New Normal in 1935; breaking the rules by...

...sharing ice cream.

In a Basket

August 2020

New Normal, Alberta

Before we get started....



I have learned a few things about life while riding in the basket of this bicycle, since 1956.

Over many years, from my perch on the handlebars, and with guidance from the guy peddling the bike, I have been able to identify a few simple truths that are the cornerstones of every decision I make. These four maxims are the foundational building blocks of the events depicted in the journals that follow:

- Life is short,
- Change is inevitable,
- Now is all there is, and
- Fear equals regret.

Covid 19 is real. I don't want to contract it and I don't want to give it to anybody else, but I am not going to hide under the bed and let it defeat me. In the pages that follow, the level of risk I am willing to take with Covid (and all things), is balanced on these four pillars. It will not be the same for everybody.

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I should also mention one other truth I have learned....

- It is never a good idea to ride without a helmet, on a bumpy road, on an old bicycle, while sitting.....

.....in a Basket.

All We Need

Summer 2020
New Normal, Alberta

*You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, well, you might find
You get what you need.*

The Rolling Stones - You Can't Always Get What You Want

Mick Jagger has been telling us since 1968 that; “*We can't always get what we want*”. Mick goes on to say that if we try, we might find what we *need* instead. Good advice, from the old counterculture icon.

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That is an attitude we could all adopt in the altered universe we now live. If things aren't attainable, apply a little imagination and settle for what we can get.

It is remarkable how many times the things we think we want aren't what we needed in the first place. I don't know how to put that into song lyrics, but here is an example:



Marshall and Deanna got married this summer. They wanted to share their union with 120 guests, in an elaborate ceremony, in two locations, but Covid overruled Cupid. Marshall and Deanna settled on an intimate ceremony at the ranch, with immediate family and a few good friends. The wedding was a picture-perfect event; informal, relaxed, and unforgettable.

Official photos of the bride and groom have not been released yet. We have this preview, and snapshots of my other progeny and their partners. That's

....All We Need



Summer of '64

Summer 2020 New Normal, Alberta

Covid made the summer of 2020 vivid, like a childhood summer.

My siblings and I went for a walk near our nephew's cabin in the Moose Mountains in Saskatchewan, early in the summer. Among the four of us, we attracted about 15 wood ticks.

The creepy little insects were a bother, but they are far from the most dangerous predators in the hills.

When we returned from our walk nephew Scott called and asked if we had seen the wolves. He caught two of them on a bush camera, at the same place, at the same time we were hiking.



We squeezed the wood ticks with a fingernail. I am not sure how we would have handled ...

.... a wolf crawling on our necks.



Bear's Dad built two go-carts for her when she was a kid. They had not been refurbished for about sixty years, so I spent some Covid time tuning them up.

We employed a test driver to check them out.



In July, I had a call from the RCMP. There was a time in my life when a call from the police would have been a very bad thing, but this turned out to be a positive event.



Three years ago, I parked an off-lease Vacuum Truck in my equipment yard. The unit was stolen the next day before I put insurance on it. I reported the loss to the RCMP, but I had lost hope that it would ever be found.

The police recovered the truck near Strathmore this summer, along with 150 other pieces of stolen industrial equipment. They called to inform me that I could have it back. It was still in great condition!

I sold the truck to Albert, the cabin sewer pumper guy...

.... so, I still get to see it occasionally.

-

I hosted a robin and her family all summer. She built a nest on a sickle hanging in my shop and raised two batches of chicks

..... on the cutting edge.



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In May, I stood on top of a windmill and had a conversation with Alvin.

I have a thing about antique windmills so when Alvin, the local windmill technician got ill a couple of years ago, he offered to sell me his inventory and passed along his customer list. I don't have Alvin's talent for refurbishing old windmills, but I have enough knowledge to maintain them.

Our friend Sherry has a 1930's Monitor, like the ones I own. I was happy to lend a hand when she needed it serviced.

time I am up...

Alvin died some time ago, but I have a conversation with him every

.... on the monkey board.

On one of my trips to Saskatchewan this summer I flew over the....
.... **longest straight stretch of railroad in the world.**

(Regina to Stoughton - 147 Km with no turns.)



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Photos courtesy Gervais Goodman

We hosted two wildflower photo shoots at our place this summer. One before, and one after...

... **The hailstorm.**



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Riley and I built a storage box for Taylor's table tennis gadgets. The box turned out well but the "*Riley and I*" part of the sentence was



... **The most special.**

I dropped my weight to 1990's level this summer. I am not quite 1980's thin...

.... yet.



Bear and I drove to Saskatchewan in July. We stayed one night at Moose Jaw's iconic Grant Hall Hotel, with the ghost of Al Capone

.... under a waxing gibbous moon.



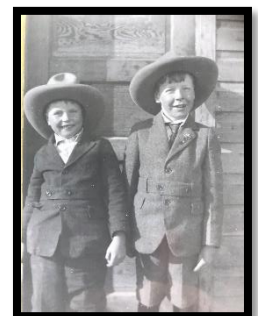
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The purpose of the trip east was to help Uncle Jim and Aunt Carol move to a new house. Jim has been collecting antiques for years, so we transported....

.... a cornucopia of treasures.

We also harvested their photo albums while we were there....



Lest any grass grow under our feet, friends and I spent time in various modes of transport:



Riding horses in the mountains with neighbour Dave.

Motorcycles through Kananaskis Country with friend Colin.



Chasing the long view with Neil W in a Shelby Cobra.



Neil describes his car as: "427 horses

.... surrounded by a Go-Cart."

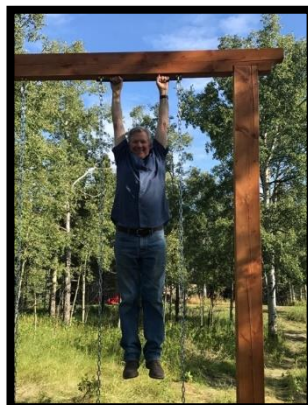
I don't know how fast Covid viruses travel, but I doubt they will catch any of us.

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I found some twisted timbers when I was cleaning out the shed in June - they had been rejected by the carpenters when we built the house more than a decade ago. Rather than store the warped timbers for another ten years, I converted them into a backyard swing.



Russ, in '64 and at 64.



Bear, reliving the ...

.... summer of 1964.

Moon Shadow

August 12, 2020

New Normal, Alberta

Bear heard on the evening news that there was a meteor shower predicted for tonight, peaking around 3:00am. The time coincides with my nightly trip down the hall so I decided that I would check it out when I got up - if the sky was clear.

I tried to be quiet as I fumbled around in the dark, but I forgot to turn off the security system before I opened the patio door. The door triggered an alarm, which caused the panel in the kitchen to blare out a warning, to everyone within a ten-mile radius that we were in imminent danger of being beaten and robbed. As a result, I shared my nocturnal astrological adventure with an adrenaline-charged Bear.

She had asked to be woken if the meteor shower was visible, but I think she expected a whispered word and a gentle hand on the shoulder. She should have been more specific.

I turned the alarm off, reassured the security company that we were not in any danger and ventured out onto the deck for a skyward look. There was a half moon and scant cloud cover, so the stars and night sky were clearly visible. The instant I looked up a streak appeared directly overhead moving from north to south.



Bear gathered some blankets and I arranged two reclining lawn chairs in the middle of the driveway. During the course of the next hour we watched dozens of space particles burn up in spectacular fashion as they entered earth's atmosphere. Some were nothing more than a blip in our peripheral vision, but many were truly awe inspiring. One meteor passed directly overhead leaving a long, *butane torch* trail behind it.

The light show was accompanied by other nocturnal sensations. A cool, damp stillness enveloped us and penetrated our protective blankets. Quiet was broken only by distant coyote howls and the intermittent hoot of an owl. The moon, low and behind us, cast long, dim shadows.

The overall effect was humbling. Sitting beneath the vastness of space, in the limitlessness of time, we felt infinitesimally small. The urgency of Covid and all the things we encounter daily, seemed insignificant among the moon and the stars, and the creatures of the night.

Awestruck, we rose and shuffled back to bed, preceded by our.....

.....moon shadow.

*Oh, I'm bein' followed by a moonshadow, moon shadow, moonshadow
Leapin and hoppin' on a moonshadow, moonshadow, moonshadow*

Cat Stevens - *Moonshadow*



Orville, PhD

August 22, 2020
New Normal, Alberta

I wrote the following biography of Orville (our garden scarecrow) back in May but never distributed it. The garden my neighbours and I planted (and Orville set out to protect) was an abject failure – a very late spring, a post-planting snowfall, two July hail storms, hungry deer and frost on August 9th all conspired to defeat the project, despite Orville’s best efforts.

We may salvage some potatoes and carrots, but will likely take less out of the garden than we put in. I don’t blame Orville; he did his best.

The forces of nature are strong.

Wednesday May 20, 2020

Orville came back home today. He has been studying at the University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources but due to the Covid pandemic, classes have been cancelled until further notice. U of S’s loss, our gain.



Orville established himself near the garden patch, at the end of our driveway. He may have gained some knowledge in the past few years, but he is still just as humble as the last time we saw him. In fact, I am not sure Orville has changed his clothes since he left.

Orville Doppelganger, PhD, FRSC Professor, Faculty of Agriculture

We had snow again last week, so the garden is drenched. I was able to till it once before the return to winter, but it will be a few days before we can start gardening. Orville suggests planting around the 24th of May. He said potatoes could go in earlier, but he does not recommend that we plant vegetables until the soil has dried out a bit more.

I took the extra time to build a utility box on my trailer to store tools. I also set up a picnic table and some lawn chairs near the patch. I don’t know how many participants we will have in our little gardening co-op but there will be room for everybody, in the garden and in the shade.

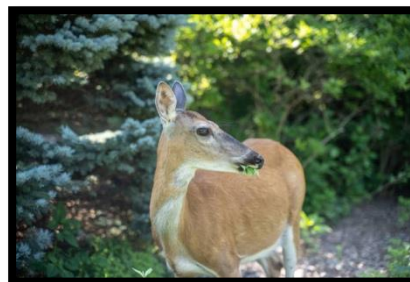
I was in the organic fertilizer business for a few years. The enterprise was not a commercial success, but I learned some things about organic growing (specifically, *how to turn money into compost*, but that is a story for another time). I ended up with slim profit but gained a passion for organic growing. I also salvaged a grain-bin-full of organic fertilizer and four large barrels of ground bone meal.

I spread fertilizer liberally on the freshly turned soil today. The garden patch smells like a dead beast, but I anticipate excellent growth once the heat gets turned on.

We should have a bumper crop, with rich soil, cooperative labour, and expert advice from

..... Orville, PhD

These follow-up photos demonstrates just how wrong my “bumper crop” prediction was.



Best Pie in the World

August 18, 2020

David Thompson Country, Alberta

You might think that “*no hunting within town limits*” would be a universal restriction, but you don’t vacation where we do. Hunting in an urban environment isn’t out of the realm of possibility west of Rocky Mountain House, in David Thompson Country.

For centuries, the residents of David Thompson Country (including David himself) shot and prepared most of their own meals. If they could bag a moose from their front door it cut down on the time and energy required to put dinner on the table.

Hunting from home has some safety concerns, hence this sign on the outskirts of Nordegg. Like most bureaucratic warnings, I am sure it is largely ignored by the residents.



Nordegg has been a ghost town, twice. It was a coal mining centre for 50 years but that ended in 1955 when the coal ran out. In 1963 the abandoned mine buildings and 300 empty houses were converted to a penitentiary. The Nordegg Correctional Centre lasted until 1992 (when they ran out of lawbreakers??). For the past 30 years the town of Nordegg has been inhabited by a new collection of ghosts, those of the miners and now, criminals.

There are many more dead people in Nordegg than there are live ones. The cemetery is overflowing, while the residential district struggles to survive.

The birth rate in Nordegg can’t keep up with the death toll; the occupational hazards of pensioners, miners and murderers overwhelms the procreation rate.



Twenty-six people perished on the same day in 1941 when a mine shaft collapsed. They are memorialized in this extension to the town cemetery.

There is some life left in Nordegg. A cafe on Main Street advertises the “*Best Pies in Alberta – maybe the World*”. A claim that cannot go unchallenged.



We stopped in at *The Miner's Café* established in an old school building - we entered through the “Girls” doorway. The young guy at the counter didn't seem to care what our gender was as he took our order.

The café appeared *Covid friendly*, but we decided that we would rather have our treat at home. I ordered a whole Saskatoon pie to go - just to be safe.

I haven't had pie in every country in the world – yet (it is on the bucket list), but the pie from *The Miner's Café* is definitely a contender for.....

.....**Best Pie in the World.**



Rocky Mountain House

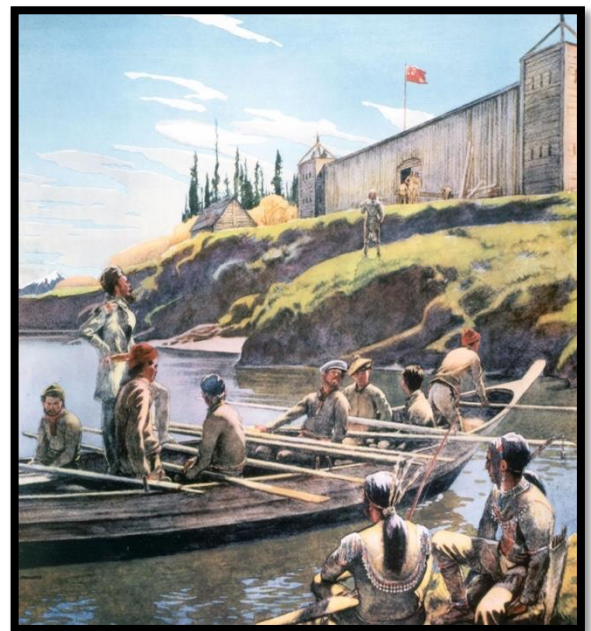
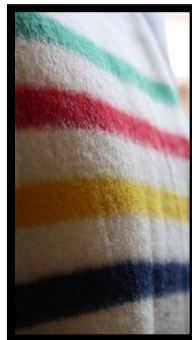
August 19, 2020

Rocky Mountain House, AB

(Riley sometimes asks me to write lesson plans for her students in elementary school. Pre-Covid, I would present the lessons to her class. Now, I just keep a few on hand for her to use if they fit the curriculum. So, if this journal seems juvenile, it is intended to be.)

The town of Rocky Mountain House is not located in, or even very close to, the Rocky Mountains. It is situated in a geographic transition zone between Prairie and Aspen Parkland, more than 100 km from the nearest mountain. So why is it called that?

The answer lies in these images:



The story starts in 1799 with the beaver on the top left. That beaver and millions like him, lived near the Rocky Mountains, but they needed to get to England.

The beaver didn't really want to go to England, but English gentlemen wanted them for material to make hats, like the one above. The gentlemen sent fur traders in York boats (pictured on the right above) to Canada to get beaver furs. They packed blankets and other items on the York boats to trade with First Nations people, who knew where the beaver lived and how to trap them.

The Traders and York boats started their journey at York Factory on Hudson's Bay. They sailed through uncharted waterways to the top of Lake Winnipeg where they joined the Saskatchewan River system. The York boats, with 14 traders in each (and four tons of trade goods on board), paddled upstream about 1500 kilometres on the Saskatchewan River until they reached Brierley Rapids, near present day Rocky Mountain House, where they could go no further.

The North West Company, as the Traders were called, built the fort below (which they called a "house") at the closest point they could get to the Rocky Mountains in their boats.

220 years later, the town that grew up around the fort on the prairie is still called.....

..... **Rocky Mountain House**

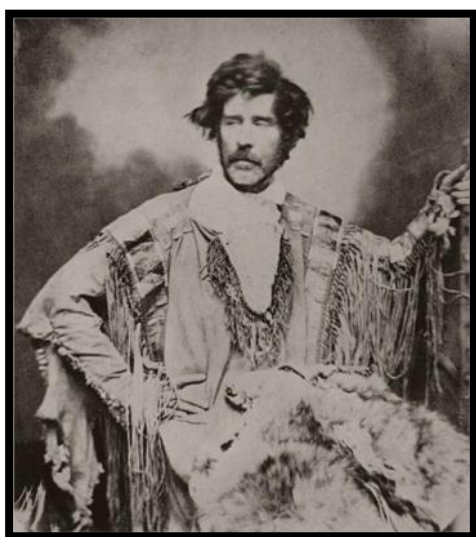


Death of Omoxesisixany

August 20, 2020

Rocky Mountain House, AB

We were introduced to this gentleman while we toured Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site yesterday. Paul Kane was an Irish/Canadian artist who traveled across Canada from 1845 – 1848 (before Canada was *Canada*) painting landscapes, fur traders and First Nations people. Kane visited Rocky Mountain House, which was a North West Company Trading Post at the time, in April of 1846. A plaque has been erected there in his honour.



I had not heard of Kane before our visit and paid scant attention to the marker at the historic site. It was only after I returned home that I dug a little deeper. Kane's artwork was easy to find on the Internet. It paints a vivid picture of life in this part of the world, in the mid 19th century.

"Kane painted First Nations people following the tenets of salvage ethnography, (painting and recording the practices and folklore of cultures threatened with extinction)". - Wikipedia

Much of Kane's work is in a style comparable to American painter Charles M. Russell, with overlapping themes but from a more *Canadian* perspective. Kane preceded Russell by more than 50 years so the work he did with Fur Traders and Indigenous people depicts cultures at a time when very little integration had occurred. Kane's raw images are indelible snapshots of people and places, captured when European and Indigenous cultures remained distinct.

This sketch, of a First Nations camp outside the newly built fort at Rocky Mountain House, provides a living example of early contact.





Medicine Pipe Stem Dance

Big Snake, Chief of the Blackfoot Indians, Recounting his War Exploits, to Five Subordinate Chiefs.



Paul Kane's artistry deserves greater recognition. When Covid ends and we are free to travel again, I would like to visit the National Gallery in Ottawa to witness firsthand, the.....



....Death of Omothesisixany

Flathead

August 21, 2020

New Normal, Alberta

One of Paul Kane's paintings struck me; first as "ugly", then "facinating", and finally "appropriate".



Flat Head Woman and Child seems almost ghoulish at first. The woman's unnaturally sloped forehead appears exaggerated; not at all in keeping with the realism depicted in Kane's body of work.

I did some research on the painting and found that the woman illustrated is a member of the Kutenai-Salish people, native to what is now Montana and south-central British Columbia. Certain sects of the Salish tribe practised cranial deformation, which was thought to enhance their appearance and improve cognitive ability.

The practice of altering the shape of the skull occurred from birth to approximately two-years old, by wrapping and putting constant pressure on the forehead. The child in the painting is bundled in a device designed for the purpose.

(At this point my fascination momentarily turned back to revulsion).

The Salish discontinued the practice of flattening the foreheads of children, but not before Europeans named Flat Head Lake in Montana after them.

While modifying skull shape is no longer a thing, the art of body augmentation remains common practice. Modern cosmetic surgery makes easy what the Salish had to work hard at. It's up to the beholder to decide which body alterations are beautiful.

For me, of the two images on this page, I prefer the look of the woman with the....



.....Flat Head

Close to the Ground

August 22, 2020
New Normal, Alberta

Wind and the smell of fresh-cut hay triggered a powerful déjà vu today. I was taking down some posts that were dangling in the breeze on a washed-out fence near the creek. The combination of sensations sent me back to 1970's Saskatchewan, where hay and fences and wind begin.



Building fences and putting up hay are hard work, and prairie wind is relentless, yet the memories they conjured today were all positive.

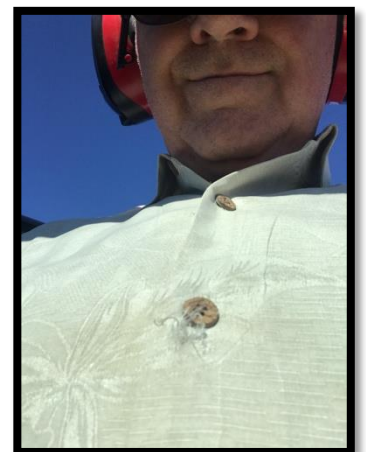
One of the beneficial effects of Covid is reconnection with the land. I have spent more time alone and up to my elbows in dirt recently, than at any time since I was a kid on the farm.

When the work was done, I sat on the bank for a while, reflecting on days spent.....

.....Close to the Ground

I had one small childhood memory that wasn't so positive. I remembered Mom reprimanding me for ripping a new shirt on barbed wire.

Apparently, I haven't learned much since the '70's.



Family Therapy

August 24, 2020

4,000' Above New Normal

The instruments on the left of this photo are what pilots nostalgically refer to as “steam gauges”. They aren’t quite as antiquated as that, but they are 20th century devices.

The fourth gauge on the top row is an altimeter; it tells us that this aircraft (C-GSXS) is at 7,500 feet above sea level. Other instruments indicate that the plane is heading 080 (east-ish) at 140 knots (260 km/h) toward CJS4 (Moose Jaw Municipal Airport).



All indicators are in the “green” and the autopilot is doing the flying. There is no *steam* whistling from any of the gauges, or the pilot.

This is my third trip to Arcola, SK this summer (fourth, if you count the time I drove). Flying is one of the few activities that has not been adversely affected by Covid 19, in fact I have *slipped the surly bonds of earth* more times this year than the previous three years combined. I fly solo, from a private hangar, to unmanned airports, with self-serve fuel facilities. I seldom encounter another person during an entire round trip.

My favourite destination is Arcola, to visit relatives. Dad, my Uncle and Aunt have all made it well known that they would rather succumb to a virus than loneliness. My brothers, my sister and I have all decided that the risk/reward ratio tilts in favour of family gatherings, with some heightened hygiene and personal contact limitations. We are a close family, but Paton’s have never been a very “huggy” bunch, so personal distancing comes easy. Everybody is healthy and we get together regularly.



Trips to Arcola combine the two best Covid-related stress cures I know of; Aviation and ...

.....Family Therapy.

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings*

High Flight - John Gillespie McGee, Jr

Surly Bonds

August 24, 2020

4,000' Above New Normal

The flight from Springbank to Arcola today was mostly uneventful (which is a very good thing in aviation), but I did have some excitement near the Moose Jaw Military Airport to break the monotony. A CF18 took off from the Airforce base and flew directly under me toward Lake Diefenbaker. It was traveling at about Mach .5 (converted to knots that is *F'ing Fast per hour*). The fighter was flying low-level, so there was no conflict 3,000' below me, but the CF-18 was close enough for me to hear the roar of jet propulsion. In fact, if old PM John Diefenbaker is buried anywhere near the lake that is named for him, I am pretty sure he heard it too.



I saw a few training planes in the practice area south of Regina and a couple of crop dusters, but they were all well below me and out of my way. Other than that, the closest thing I encountered was a hawk, who was flying more than a mile high, off to starboard.

The pilot of a WWII Harvard came on the radio and announced that he was conducting a low-level flight from Regina to Lumsden. I was much too far away to see the old war bird, but I could picture it in my mind. I imagined having a simulated dog fight with the sturdy training aircraft (and winning!)



The skies on my flight path would have been littered with Harvard Mk II's during the early 1940's. Thousands of British-Canadian airmen were trained in Harvards at WWII air bases across the prairies. Brandon, Fort Macleod, Swift Current, and dozens of other airports still have a triangular, military runway configuration. Airports, like this one near Swift Current, were designed so that training pilots would have six headings to land, depending on wind direction.

On one of my earlier trips to Arcola I fulfilled a long-standing promise and took my grand nieces and nephew for a flight. The little girls went first. I think they enjoyed the flight but the thrill of hearing themselves tell knock-knock jokes through the headset microphone system was a far bigger thrill.

The teenagers were great co-pilots. Fourteen-year-old Titus took the stick and with very little coaching, punched a hole in a cloud.

There won't be many "*what I did this summer*" stories better than that when he goes back to school in the fall.



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On the way home, one of the old steam gauges malfunctioned. No amount of pounding on the dash would activate it so I had no Airspeed Indicator the whole flight. The two GPS's on board gave me ground speed readings, but that doesn't calculate directly to air speed if wind is a factor.

The wind was insignificant when I landed at home on runway 2-6, so no harm done. There was, however, a little steam coming from my ears. I don't like it when things in the cockpit don't work.

Until the ASI is fixed, I will not be slipping any.....

....**Surly Bonds.**



Heartbeat of the Nation

August 25, 2020

Wilmar, Saskatchewan

You won't find Wilmar, Saskatchewan on any tourist maps. The hamlet consists of four or five houses, a railroad siding, an ancient community hall and one commercial establishment - Wilmar Garage.

The town is half a mile off a not-too-busy highway, surrounded by a sea of canola. Very few tourists make their way to Wilmar but, at 10:00am every weekday since time began (or when Ricky bought the Garage, whichever came first), people from far and wide converge in the back room of the auto repair shop for coffee. Rick brews the coffee. Ladies from the community bring fresh baked goods or garden produce and they all gather on a varied assortment of old chairs to visit and discuss the events of the day. It is a time-honoured tradition that few outside the community are invited to attend.



Being a brother/son to some of the regulars gets me a visitor's pass. When I visit Paton's in the next town over (as I did this week) I am included in their weekday coffee break ritual at Ricky's. I have been there enough times to be familiar to the group, but not so often that I am one of "them".

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The discussion invariably starts with a weather report.

Rick: *Windy enough for ya' Ernie?*

Ernie: *Windy! There is so much topsoil blowing around - I saw a gopher this morning, three feet out of his hole and still digging!*

Once the entire group is gathered and everybody has a coffee and a sticky-bun in hand, the conversation turns to politics or agriculture, sometimes both at the same time.

Dennis: *I see that Finance Minister Morneau resigned yesterday.*

Ted: *About time! That Liberal bastard is so crooked he could sleep in a grain auger!*



Mom, rubbering on the party line.

There is no argument. Everybody in this group has a decidedly conservative viewpoint. The downfall of a disgraced Liberal only fortifies their worldview.

Conversation in rural Saskatchewan often includes a certain amount of gossip. It started with telephone party lines back in the pioneer years when everybody in the community had access to everybody else's conversations. Privacy developed as a community pursuit as opposed to an individual thing. It is accepted practice in and around Wilmar that everybody in the community knows everyone else's business, but that information is seldom shared outside the community.

Today's gossip was about young Buck Anderson.

Derek: I was about to turn in last night around midnight when I noticed Buck Anderson's car parked in the trees behind the Hall. I put my pants on and wandered over to see what was going on. Buck and his girlfriend were in the back seat. The windows were all steamy and Buck's old Ford was shaking like the paint mixer over at the Hardware store.

I hollered at him: "*Buck!, what the Hell are you doing in there.*"

Buck stuck his sweaty face out the back window and said: "*We're just necking*".

So, I says: "*I sure as Hell hope you are wearing a rubber on your "neck", otherwise that girl in there is liable to get pregnant*".

More than one cup of coffee slopped on the floor as general laughter erupted.

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I am honoured to be part of the Wilmar community, if only for a day at a time. In gathering places like Wilmar Garage, you can hear.....

.....the heartbeat of the nation.

A Lunatic

August 31, 2020

New Normal, AB

I live with a lunatic.

I mean that in the kindest possible way. Bear says she is more susceptible to restless nights and headaches during a full moon. Tonight, she never came to bed until after midnight, citing the moon as the culprit. We had a brief conversation as she crawled into bed. Bear promptly fell asleep, and I woke up. Not to waste valuable insomnia time, I did some research on lunacy – the effects of a full moon on human behaviour.

There is a long-held belief that moon phases influence sanity. According to published research in *Scientific American*, there is not a shred of evidence for it. The article concludes:

“The lunar lunacy effect appears to be no better supported than is the idea that the moon is made of green cheese”.

But the legends persist.

There is a reference to *lunatik* in the Gospel of Mathew 17. Scholars believe that the Bible passage is attributed to a person with epilepsy.

15 Lord have mercy on my son: for he is lunatik, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

Even before biblical times, philosophers Aristotle and Pliny the Elder argued that the full moon caused sleep deprivation, which increased psychotic incidents among insane individuals.



Until at least 1700, it was a common belief that the moon influenced fevers, rheumatism, episodes of epilepsy and other diseases.

There might be something to it. I am wide awake at 1:30 in the morning listening to *Lunatic Fringe* by heavy metal band *Red Rider* and reading Bible passages. I may have to amend my opening line.

Bear lives with

..... a lunatic.

Time will Tell

August 31, 2020

New Normal, Alberta

Covid casts an ever-present cloud over everything these days, but we are finding the silver linings out here in New Normal.

Thank you for sharing the continuing journey.

Russ



I turn 65 years old tomorrow. So, my next journal will either contain age-induced wisdom, or a blank page...

.....Time will Tell.