I’m here. Didn’t go very far... just to Lincolnton, Georgia.

Talk about perfect timing! To retire five minutes before the world as we knew it collapsed in on itself. My Lord. My greatest hope is that Hart Park does experiences a renewal and complete recovery.

In my life, I coordinated recreation programs in the Air Force (Nellis AFB in Nevada ad

Hahn AB in Germany), events at Metropolitan State College, Denver, and Ortega Trail Parks & Recreation in Lake Elsinore. I worked for the cities of Pacific Grove, Seaside and Watsonville in the Monterey Bay and several LA County Parks in LA County.

The best – very best – and most fulfilling days of my recreation life was at William S. Hart Regional Park, hands down!

Imagine me, a former arts instructor, law enforcement officer, school bus driver, disc jockey, lead singer/songwriter in heavy metal & blues bands, graphic artist and gospel singer sitting at a desk at the art office preparing an annual events report listing – all the accomplishments for any given year – and it reads like this:

January - the planning month… driving David Jallo, Norm Phillips or Eric Riefman nuts with proposals for:

* Black History Month Art Show in the Hall (February)
* Visual Arts Exhibition in the hall (March)
* Artisan Row Home Arts & Craft Show (April)
* Touring 15 County Parks with my Genesis Legacy Projects
* Coordinate Eagle Service Project at Hart Park which result in signage system though out the park:
  + the naming of trails (Lisbeth road, Fritz Road etc...)
  + vista observation points like: Prince Point, Prancer Point,
  + and trailside benches.
* Volunteer to assist or coordinate: Train show, Rose Show, Arts Classic, Native American Pow Wow, Museum music series, Easter egg hunts, pumpkin fests,
* Silent Movies, Hall Movies both for the Friends and my own indoor movies
* Music in the Park Concert Series (May)
* Exhibition of Fabric and Quilting Arts (June)
* Movies in the Park (August)
* Country Western line dances in the hall (September)
* Parking lot Swap Meets (October)
* Volunteering to run sound for The Friends’s Movie/lectures and Silents Under the Stars
* Volunteering to help with Book Store set-ups at special events
* Working the Parking lot at monster events, like Pow Wow & Pet Fair, as the Parking Lot Czar
* Driving shuttles to the museum for special events
* Hart Holiday Arts & Crafts Boutique (November)

Of course, that’s only half of it! OMG. I loved all of it and that experience was in the most eco-diverse park in southern California…. trails, bison, hills and campgrounds!

So, what I’m doing now? Well, what do you think? Well I started a new proposal list last January, when I took over as manager of the Lincolnton American Legion Post #194. It had been closed for 2 years. I put together a team of volunteers and former members and we are up and running, with:

* The Lincolnton Traders Fair
* The Legion Swap meet and Flea Market
* The Legion Community Ice Cream Social
* The Veterans Day Celebration and Dinner
* “Sit & Sew” Classes with the Classic Southern Quilt Guild
* “Morning Glories” – Women’s Walking and Kayaking Club
* Karaoke Nights
* Friday night Taco, Steak, Spaghetti and Salad Bar nights
* High School Football game after-parties for parents
* Hall rentals
* Senior Citizen Poker games.

COVID has dampened but not stopped our community outreach. The County has had 37 cases and 6 deaths. We locally, haven’t seen any cases or deaths. We have been spared.

Today we experienced an annual audit of our operation by district mucky-mucks (we passed). And, as a sad side note, of 15 county American Legions, we are 1 of 2 that are actually open.

The wife and I bought an amazing forested 10 acres with our own pond (5 kinds of fish with a dock), a standard gate 1/8th mile from our house, deer, snapping and painted turtles, beaver and Canada Geese, birds, and more. A tri-level 1700 sq. ft house, modern country ranch style with wrap-around deck. We are 5 miles from town. I bought a chariot motorcycle… basically it’s a man-cave in a forest.

Our California retirement income is worth 3 times more here in Georgia. Very little taxes, gas is $1.94, eggs are 18 for $1.18 at Walmart, no sirens, no traffic, can’t see my neighbors. I should have moved years ago. These are friendliest folks I’ve ever met.

Al Ewing