

the Ken Chronicles

49



Ken Chronicles

are published quarterly, usually on or about the first of the months of February, May, August, and November by Ken Bausert.

As the name implies, it's all about me... my life, travels, opinion and philosophy.

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Number 49 - October/November, 2018 - First Printing

Here's another issue arriving in your mail boxes early; I'll be in Florida for a three-week mini-vacation at the beginning of November so I figured I'd get this one out before we left. At this pace, I'm aiming to get my February issue out at the beginning of January.

To the best of my recollection, this issue is also the first to feature a full-length story by someone other than myself. After my cousin Warren died this past spring, I attended a memorial service in Daytona Beach (where he had lived) and another in New York (where many friends and other family live). At the New York gathering, I ran into old friends Ted and Turid, who I hadn't seen in many years. We got to talking about family history, genealogy and such, and Turid told me an interesting story about her mom. I found it so intriguing that I asked her to write it up for my Chronicles; I'm happy to be able to share it with all of you now (see page 5).

Looking toward the future, our recent trip to visit our granddaughter in Tacoma, Washington – as well as a short jaunt to Vancouver, British Columbia – are slated to be included in tKC's landmark issue #50. Hey! Who'd have ever thought it would last this long??

— Ken

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The Cover Wrap:

Bee on our glass patio table. (Photo by Ken Bausert, © 2018)

Input & Feedback

July 13, 2018

Ken,

On the subject of political turmoil, I have to admit that as a prognosticator, I get a failing grade. Late in 2016, I predicted that Donald Trump wouldn't live to see Inauguration Day. I really thought that there was going to be a mysterious plane crash—orchestrated by almost anyone, and therefore wonderful fodder for a whole generation of conspiracy theorists—but never to be fully explained. Oh, well... people shouldn't come to me for predictions!

I'm also mystified by the fact that nobody—no, not a single, living, breathing, human being--seems to have noticed that there was a special feature to the 100th issue of *Brooklyn!* It had 28 pages, rather than the usual 24. Well, all right, let's be a little charitable here. Let's say, instead, that if anyone *did* notice, they didn't say anything to me. But, as a native-born Brooklynite, I already know the proper response to this: waddaya gonna do? (I could also say, go fight City Hall. It's good to have a variety of expressions to use).

Fred Argoff, Penthouse L, 1170 Ocean Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11230

(Yeah, I noticed that it took me a little longer to read that last issue of *Brooklyn!* but couldn't figure out why. —Ken 😊)

Ken—

I meant to write you a real letter of comment after I read each of your issues. I really enjoy your zine & your take on life. I have your latest in my bag now. I'll try & send more timely responses.

Thanks!

Davida Gypsy Breier

7/16/18

Hi Ken, the Rubber Band Man,

No pondering frenzy over the opening quote this time around since I subscribe to living my life as I want. I can find no earthly reason why I should live according to the image others think I should be, nor can I find any heavenly reason either. It's been strongly suggested I should curtail or change my diet, habits, activities, etc., because it may extend my life. My argument is why should I give up what I enjoy in my life in exchange for a few additional years of not being able to enjoy it. Apparently, beloved cousin Warren liked tobacco. If he gave up the tobacco some 25 years ago, what's to say he still could have developed cancer and passed on anyway, give or take a week or two. If he would have followed the professional advice he would have denied himself 25 years of doing something he enjoyed. I am in no way advocating tobacco use, merely using it as an example of professionals and others blowing smoke up my

ass in order to stop me from doing what I want. I'm a strong believer in following my dream(s) even if it involves a risk. I would view your lead in quote to top the list of quotes so far and hope that more people would subscribe to it.

(Your views mirror the sentiment expressed to me by one of Warren's sons. Perhaps I'm being selfish, then, in wishing he had quit smoking so that we might have had more time together. —Ken)

I can appreciate cousin Warren's talent. Years ago we had a rocking chair re-caned and we still have that chair today. I was amazed as the person weaved the cane and made it look so easy. I had stopped in to check on the chair, unfortunately, I couldn't stay too long because Miss Jude suddenly went into labor with the child we would be rocking in that chair.

Since I wasn't a gear-head, no money in my pocket or elsewhere, or have a job I don't have any fond memories of used car lots. I do remember having an old Plymouth we called the Blue Bullet. I wanted to drive fast but the Blue Bullet wasn't up to speed. I also don't recall any hot women clamoring to sit on the hood of the Blue Bullet to have their photo taken, nor for that matter, any cool looking guys leaning on the car for a picture either. I did ponder for a moment or two of what Ro thought of the photo you kept all those years with the leggy brunette sitting on your car and what became of Kathy the hood ornament.

(I've kept several letters and photos from old girl friends – and it could certainly be considered strange if I hadn't saved anything else from my past. But, as you know, I've got tons of memorabilia and I consider it all a part of who I am. Sure, I'd like to reconnect with a lot of old friends – girls and guys – to reminisce and, in a sense, I have. A woman I dated while in high school visited Ro and I in Florida with her current boyfriend and, every so often, I go back to my old neighborhood to keep in touch with a woman I grew up with (my first girlfriend). I also connected with another girl I dated while in high school through Classmates.com; I remembered her brother's ((at the time))new Chrysler 300 and she remembered we went to a movie and saw "The Bridge On The River Kwai." I don't think Ro is worried about me running off with any old girlfriends any time soon. —Ken)

I remember hanging out and shooting hoops with a well known DJ who worked at a popular radio station in the city. He rented a place in our small town outside the city for privacy. We kept his secret, he was just one of the guys. I think he refused to take a photo next to the Blue Bullet as well.

Is there some rule of the universe that a refrigerator quits at the most inopportune moment? I wasn't as fortunate as you, the refrigerator was in stock but the delivery date for my area was days away. So I blatantly offered the salesman a bribe, he talked to his boss and suddenly I had next day delivery.

So should I expect to see a photo of a huge rubber band ball in a future Chronicles? Tales of people coming from all over to see your rub-

ber band ball? A write up in the magazine, Snap It Stretch It, a publication dedicated to rubber bands. The article begins: Ken Bausert, a well known fix-it genius, holds his house together with rubber bands and enjoys his hot tub as the result of the under appreciated band of rubber. The band plays on. All I can add, ingenious.

Although it was expected yet sad for the family when beloved cousin Warren moved on, I enjoyed the glimpse and celebration of Warren's life, he was gracious, talented, and giving, In my world of pondering I suspect beloved cousin Warren is off raising cane somewhere.

I really liked the cover photo. Then I spotted something as the fog began to lift. Directly down from the two windows of the main house in the rocks there is a face with the claw of a Maine lobster snapped onto the nose. Of course, I could just be seeing things or I just live in a fog and unaccustomed to it lifting.

(*Yep, I see it too! -Ken*)

The Ken Chronicles #48 read as if you had fun putting it together and I had fun turning the pages in anticipation of what was next. Thanks for the fun and enlightening read.

Also thanks for the comments on accepting a million dollars (someone has to die) and beggars on the street, they will be in the next skunk journal. Your comment also reminded me of buskers and street performers, if they catch my attention, cause me to pause, I contribute, they earned it.

DB Pedlar, 25727 Cherry Hill Rd., Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

August 8, 2018

Hello Ken,

Buncha druggies in the little neighborhood park next door - one counting a massive bundle of crumpled "ones" he's collected while pan-handling for "food." Yeah, right! Kids playground equipment hanging all abandoned & forlorn. Please don't let flies or mosquitos do their thing on me because who knows where they have been!

Other than that - It's Hot Town- Summer In The City- back uh my neck all dirty n' gritty here in SLC, Utah! Been a while sent you sent the latest Ken Chronicles, sorry for delay in reply!

Last night I was cleaning around here & found KC #28, August, 2013! I got to sittin' around & read the whole thing again! Ken, how do you make stories about trying to buy a nice new air conditioner or bed sound interesting? Also - good advice about getting a check-up & also a trip to the dentist to take care of anything before going on a vacation trip! I learned the hard way when a bad tooth went "viral" at a restaurant in Portland, Oregon! Blaw!

Oh, and I split a gut reading your review in that issue about the latest Bond film. I just saw the latest Tom Cruise *Mission Impossible* production. What is it with action movies? I don't care how fit you are - but

(Continued on page 24)

A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE

by Turid H. Mann

A story such as this one beckons to begin "Once upon a Time," although that would really be Tommy's story. As for me, I was born in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, 1949. My mother had been born in Norway and came to America with her parents in 1929. My mother had four daughters: Carol, Evelyn, Jo-Anne and myself, Turid. You can see from the start that my name is quite different than my sisters. This point proves most fateful and absolutely pivotal. It was odd that my sisters all had American names and I was the only child given a Norwegian name. My mother had carried seven children, three boys who did not survive to birth and four girls. I was the last of seven. Did she know I would be the last? After seven how is one to know that this one is the last? But never-the-less, I was the last and the only one who carries a family name. Turid was my grandmother's name. My middle name is Hedwig, which is also a family name. My mother's name was Hedwig.



A traditional Norwegian village.
(photo found online, photographer unknown – Ken)

My mother died when I was two years old. My father, incapable of being a parent, left us in the care of my mother's parents. In Norwegian, they would be called mormor and morfar. Isn't that cute. They identify grandparents as either bestemor and bestefar in general, or specifically as mormor if it is your grandmother on your mother's side and likewise morfar if it is your grandfather on your mother's side. Similarly, father's side would be farmor and farfar. Now that we have made that clear; I speak of my mormor and morfar, but I would refer to them as bestemor and bestefar.

I called my grandmother Mama, and I called my grandfather Papa.

I lived with Mama and Papa in Holbrook, Long Island, from the time I was two until I had graduated from high school at the

age of seventeen. Unfortunately, my grandparents did not teach us Norwegian. I was 19 when I married Ted. He, by the way, is also of Norwegian heritage. His father was born in England, hence the last name Mann; but his mormor, grandmother on his mother's side was born in Norway.

My grandfather and grandmother died when I was 20, within six weeks of each other. Needless to say it was quite shocking to me. I had no real extended family. It was Ted and I from there on out.

Many years later...

Ted and I lived in Patchogue since we were married almost 50 years now. In the old days, in Patchogue on South Ocean Avenue, stood a tiny luncheonette called "Swanky's." While swanky was obviously an over statement, it was a cute little place to enjoy a reasonably priced lunch. I frequented it many times, as town was close enough to walk to on a daily basis. Well, as time went on Patchogue fell into a downturn in economic times, and many stores that were family owned had closed, leaving Swanky's empty. One day as I was walking by, to my great surprise, a new owner had opened up for business. I ventured in to wish the new owner success and welcome them to my town. As I approached, I happened to extend my hand to a man standing there holding menus. I said to him, "I am so glad to see you have opened this luncheonette again."

With that he said, "Oh, I'm not the owner, I just printed their menus." I introduced myself saying, "Hi, my name is Turid. It's nice to meet you."

With that the magic began.

The man holding the menus, Tommy, said to me, "That's an interesting name you have; what nationality is it?"

I replied, "Oh my name, yes, it was my grandmother's name. It's Norwegian."

That said, Tommy looked at me with a twinkle in his eyes and a far away smile. He replied, "Oh, Norwegian," with a long sigh. "I had a girl friend once who was Norwegian. My word, she was something. Her name was Hedwig."

With that, I felt myself literally weak in the knees and had to sit in the chair. Tommy, being very perceptive, had noticed my sudden reaction to his words. He said to me, "Oh I'm so sorry...did I say something to upset you?"

A long conversation ensued. I said, "Well, it's just that my mother's name was Hedwig also, and that's my middle name. I haven't heard anyone in my lifetime ever saying that name."

"Really?" He asked about my mother; where was she born, where did she live? His questions flew out with delighted anticipation. Finally, it was determined that they had both lived in Bay Ridge and the time frame fit.

Tommy said, "I think my girlfriend was your mother."

She was, in fact, the young woman Tommy had not only dated but had fallen in love with. He took great pleasure in having the opportunity to talk about her. I had not had anyone really speak to me about my mother before.



A typical Bay Ridge, Brooklyn street.
(photo found online, photographer unknown – Ken).

grandmother told me was that it all happened quite unexpectedly, "A parent should never have to see their child die." My mother had just turned 30 when she died.

And I could sense the pain, even as a small child; I guess I never dared to bring the subject up again. I loved my grandmother very much, as well my grandfather, and certainly would not want to bring them pain. Therefore, my mother had remained an enigma to me. At two years old, a child is not developed enough to form memories; so I had no memory of my mother; not her face, not her smile, not the touch of her hand. I often felt somewhat like a sea turtle. A female sea turtle comes ashore, digs a hole in the sand on the beach, buries her eggs and swims back into the sea never to return. The little sea turtle emerges from the egg and scurries to the sea itself; and so life continues.

But that does not mean that I had not suffered from the loss. On the contrary, it is difficult for most people to grasp the enormity of such a loss, something they themselves have not experienced. I will tell you perhaps the saddest and painful parts, not for sym-

pathy as I am now 68 years old and it was a long time ago; but for others to take into consideration as best they can. As a small child, I would look at other children. I knew they had mommies and daddies. I saw them. I could see the mothers speaking to my little friends and could see the smiles they had. I would see other children walk into school holding their mother's hand. I would see other children at concerts at school and see their parents there. As a small child, it feels very real that it is somehow your fault. You have heard this, I'm sure. Let me clarify that a bit. One doesn't say to oneself, "It is my fault my mother is dead." Not exactly. What does happen though, is that I never felt quite as good as those lucky children with parents. I felt broken, like an old toy that should be discarded. I felt a little dirty and torn, never quite good enough. It is quite subliminal.

Most important to my story is that having been only two years old, I had nothing to hold on to, no memory, no vision, no last story, nothing.

Then I met Tommy. Now I was a grown woman with a teenage daughter of my own. I sat in this little luncheonette with Tommy going on and on with stories about my mother. How he had had to go to war, WWII. He said, "But I had to, I had to go, no choice. I loved Hedwig very much. She was a wonderfully warm and compassionate person – beautiful I might add," he said with a sudden full smile that made his eyes light up.

Then he added, "I came home from war and she had married," and the air suddenly became heavy.

He was so sad; he said he remained her friend as best he could. He also mentioned that the man she had married had broken her heart; and it broke his heart not to be able to relieve her pain. Timing, misfortune, missteps; all a part of life. Never-the-less, it thrilled my soul to finally have had the opportunity to sit and listen and listen and listen, hanging on every word to a wonderful story about my mother; to have met someone who had seen the best in her, to have truly loved her. It made my mother real for the first time. It had filled a part of my soul that had been a dark empty void all my life. It more than sufficed, it was a total amelioration.

I finally tore myself away and bid goodbye to my chance acquaintance. I floated all the way home to my husband and beautiful daughter with a story I couldn't wait to tell them. I never met Tommy again; but once was enough. To think it all could occur only for the fact that I, out of four children, was the one daughter with the Norwegian name. ■

People, Places & Things (that aren't there anymore)

THE THUNDERBOLT



remained standing until it was demolished in 2000, shortly after I paid a visit to photograph it.

According to Wikipedia: "It was featured

briefly in Woody Allen's 1977 film *Annie Hall* as the boyhood home of Alvy Singer (Allen's character). The house was a real residence, built in 1895 as the Kensington Hotel. The roller coaster was constructed with part of its track scaling the top of the building."

During my research for this article I discovered that a new roller

Ever changing, Coney Island has always been synonymous with amusement parks, and even though its heyday was supposedly over by the time I was born, it was still an amazing place to visit during the 1950s. At that time, there were no less than three full-sized roller coasters: the 1927 Cyclone (an historic landmark still thrilling riders to this day) as well as the Thunderbolt and the Tornado (both of which are long gone).

A typical wooden roller coaster, the Thunderbolt operated from 1925 until 1982 and



coaster called the Thunderbolt has been constructed in Coney Island at Surf Avenue and West 15th Street – near the location of the original – and opened for business in 2014. It bears no resemblance to the old Thunderbolt, being of all steel construction and of a completely different design.



According to an online site: "Thunderbolt was manufactured by Zamperla at a cost of \$10 million and has a 90-degree vertical drop, a 100-foot loop, a zero-gravity roll, multiple dives, hills and a corkscrew."

(Publicity photo is from that site.)

SHERMAN PAUR

Back in the 1980s I was seriously involved in photography. I belonged to a camera club, entered juried competitions and exhibitions and was quite successful with my work. I also taught courses in photography at the adult ed programs at two local high schools. Because of my involvement I got to know – and learn from – a great many other photographers. One of those people was Sherman Paur.

Sherman owned a medical supply store in the Bronx but was a graduate horticulturist, having an immense knowledge of – and interest in – all kinds of plants and flowers. Because of his love of that field and photography, he became a master photographer and color printer specializing in those subjects. Of course, this was all back in the days of film, before digital was perfected. His color prints not only won awards wherever he entered them but also inspired others, like me, to try and

emulate his quality.

Sherman was twenty years older than me but lived close by and we developed a close friendship. I often worked on his (or his wife's) car when it needed service. We sometimes shared darkroom tips pertaining to our printing techniques and had dinner together with our wives.

Even after digital cameras became mainstream, and Sherman switched over to the new medium, his work was still impressive. I once asked him, though, whether he thought the digital prints he was making were as good as those he had made from film and he said, "No comparison; I still feel my color negatives produced better results."

After I dropped out of the camera club scene, I didn't see too much of Sherman but learned that his wife had died. Then in 2014, I was talking to a few women from a camera club that Sherman had belonged to for many years; they told me they were taking Sherman out to dinner at an Italian restaurant in our neighborhood for his 91st birthday.

"Would you mind if I joined you?" I asked.

"Not at all."

And so I was fortunate to spend some time with my old friend and catch up on what he'd been doing lately.

After that evening, I'd met Sherman at a photography related event or in a local supermarket a few times. For the last year or so, I've been telling Ro, "We really should call up Sherman and invite him over for dinner one evening." But I never did. You know how you sometimes mean to do something but keep putting it off?

I recently learned from a mutual friend that Sherman died within the past year; he would have been 95 in 2018. Now I'm really sorry I kept putting off that call.



THE MURRAY HILL RESERVOIR

You know, I've lived my entire life living in or near New York City and yet I just found out about the Murray Hill Reservoir by watching a documentary on TV today. Also known as the Croton Distribution Reservoir, this massive structure was completed in 1842 and supplied clean drinking water to Manhattan for 60 years. It stood at 42nd Street and 5th Avenue, the current site of the NYC Public Library, built from 1902-1911.

Even though Manhattan is surrounded by water, clean drinking water has always been in short supply. The Hudson and East Rivers couldn't be tapped as sources since they are both brackish (fresh and salt water combined). In the early days, people depended primarily on cisterns, wells, and natural springs; but these quickly were overcome by an increasing population and became polluted. And, since New York City had no other abundant source of fresh water, the Croton River in northern Westchester County was dammed and a gigantic aqueduct constructed (from 1837-1842) to bring that water to Manhattan. Driven entirely by gravity – dropping 13-inches in each mile – that water source is still supplying some of the city's needs today.

The Croton Distribution Reservoir was built on Murray Hill which, at that time, was the highest elevation in the city. The granite walls of the structure stood 50-feet high, were 25-feet thick, and held 20-million gallons of water; atop the walls were promenades where New Yorkers could stroll and take in the panoramic views.



Today, more than a dozen reservoirs north of Manhattan – and three huge tunnels – supply water to the city's over 8 million people.

(Photo from the NYC Public Library online Archives.)



The Silver Lake Trip

Our son and daughter-in-law rented a house on Silver Lake, up-state New York in the Adirondack State Park, for a week in August and invited us up for a few days. A mile-long, one-lane, dirt road through dense forest leads from a country road to the home site on a ledge overlooking the water. The lake itself is large, about three miles long, and reportedly one of the clearest in the state; I went for a swim and felt the water temperature was perfect – probably about eighty degrees. Along with the house are several canoes, kayaks, and a row boat for the guests to use and we took full advantage of them.



ABOVE: View from the house of Silver Lake.
BELOW: Grandson, Baxter, enjoys paddling his kayak.



The area itself is "in-the-middle-of-nowhere." But nearby are numerous sites worth visiting, so on separate occasions, we checked out Whiteface Mountain, Lake Placid, High Falls Gorge, and the Adirondack Wildlife Refuge – where injured or orphaned animals are brought for rehabilitation (or permanent residence, if they're unable to be returned to the wild).

We had a great time and were able to capture some memorable photos during our stay.



ABOVE:
Looking down from atop
Whiteface Mountain.

RIGHT: Resident owl
at Adirondack Wildlife
Refuge.

BOTTOM: Frog in a
pond at the wildlife
refuge.



Updates, Oddities & Random Thoughts

In tKC #48, I mentioned WLIR, 92.7 FM, a radio station on Long Island that showcased a lot of new music way before anyone else. I also noted that a new film/documentary had been made about it: **New Wave; Dare To Be Different**, but I had been unable to find it to watch. Shortly after that issue was released I found the film listed on Showtime and was able to DVR it.

I recently got a chance to watch the movie and, true to its title, it focused mainly on the 1980s when the station was showcasing the likes of the Thompson Twins, The Fixx, and Talking Heads. I had hoped there would be more on the station's activity in the 1970s when they were pushing progressive rock, but never-the-less, it was an informative and entertaining film... for a while! I fast-forwarded through some of the last third of the movie because it got a bit repetitious and I really wasn't into the bands they were featuring. If you were a fan, you might want to look for this film on your own cable networks.

You may remember back in tKC #46 I mentioned this fabulous bakery in Middletown, NY, called Daddy's Donuts. I raved about the amazing things they had and how inexpensive it was. And, even though it was

in an out-of-the-way location, and not on a main thoroughfare, it was always crowded.

Well, our son recently drove over there to buy some goodies and found it closed. By Googling their store online, he was shocked to see the post (on left) which says they would no longer be open for retail sales - only wholesale. They will, however, fill your order if you're buying two dozen or more donuts.

They claim they need more time for their family – and I get that – but, if that's the case, why not hire a couple people to help run the store instead of giving up a successful retail business with a dedicated following?

 **Daddy's Donuts & Bake Shop**
Aug 5 at 10:33am • 

It's been almost 3 years since we opened our doors and today Daddy's Donuts has decided to do what's best for our business and our family and will now be a large-scale only bakery. This means that we will still service our wholesale customers as we do today, but will no longer have a store front. We know we've disappointed many people but we've made this decision with our growing family in mind and hope that our customers can understand the importance of time and family. We thank all of our customers who have visited us over the years and have helped support our dreams.

...

DONUT WORRY! For all of our amazing donut lovers, we will be taking and fulfilling donut orders of 2 or more dozen donuts.

...

You can find the order form and details on our website at www.daddysdonutsandbakery.com. Link is

What I've Been _____ Lately:

READING:

I often enjoy reading **Outside** magazine even though I don't subscribe to it or buy it at a news stand; many of the medical professionals I frequent usually have it in their waiting rooms, so every time I'm at a doctor or the dentist, I look for it. Although I'm not the most avid hiker or sportsman, I enjoy reading about other people's adventures in the wild.

Outside was the magazine that first published a 9,000 word article by Jon Krakauer called, "Death of an Innocent," which later became the 1996 non-fiction book – and subsequent film – "Into The Wild," about Chris McCandless and his attempt to drop out of society and live off the land in Alaska. I've since read the book and seen the film, both favorites of mine, but it all started with the magazine article.

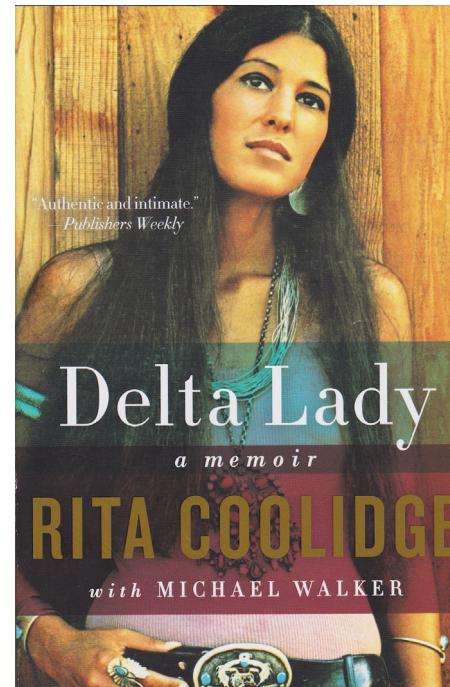
In this past June's issue, I was in the waiting room of my dentist and had just started reading an interesting article called, "**Rattled**," about a young man who was bitten by a rattlesnake while hiking with his family in Yosemite National Park.

The hygienist suddenly entered the room and said, "Ken, we're ready for you." I got up, started to walk over and mentioned the article I was reading. She replied, "Oh, let me have it and I'll have the receptionist make a copy so you can take it home and finish reading."

It was a mind-blowing story by Kyle Dickman that I would highly recommend, especially if you enjoy the great outdoors. The actual event was scary enough but learning all about how Kyle was able to be rescued and treated – plus the facts about snakes, venom and anti-venoms – all made for an engrossing and well-written lesson. Most local libraries have a good selection of recent magazines so you might be able to find this issue there if you'd like to check it out.

I happened to catch the end of an interview on TV recently with Rita Coolidge. In case you've never heard of her, she is a singer-songwriter whose musical roots go back to the 1970s when Leon Russell gave her the nickname, Delta Lady, and wrote a song of the same title in her honor. The reason for the interview was that she had just released a book – ***Delta Lady, a memoir*** – but it was published in 2016 so I'm thinking it might have been an old interview.

I can't say I've been a huge Rita Coolidge fan because, even though I think she's a fine singer and I like a lot of her music, I don't own any of her albums. Still, I was intrigued by what this book might have to offer because she was involved with so many of my other favorite musical personalities as their collaborator or background singer.



So, after putting the book on my "wish list," our son gave it to me for my recent birthday. I started reading it as soon as I had some free time and discovered I was hooked; I don't think I ever read a book as quickly as I did this one. Part of the reason is that it's well-written, concise, and very interesting. And, while many of the biographies or autobiographies I've read have way too much detail in them (I mean, I *really* don't need to know that you liked cornflakes for breakfast when you were five years-old, do I?), this seemed to have just the right amount. It's also a fairly short read, with only 218 pages.

There are lots of stories about Rita's early childhood, her Cherokee heritage (I knew those high cheek bones were of native American DNA), and introduction to singing with her sister, Priscilla. And, of course, there are great tales about touring with Joe Cocker and Russell for the *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* tour in 1970 (still one of my fave live albums to this day) as well as singing with Delanie & Bonnie, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and Kris Kristofferson (whom she married and later divorced).

I was not surprised to read Rita's glowing praise for Graham Nash (who loved her dearly) but shocked to learn that drummer Jim Gordon once gave her a black eye and later wound up in prison for murdering his own mother. Of course there are countless other people who crossed her path and have bit parts in this book. I don't know how many people would be drawn to *Delta Lady* if they didn't know Rita Coolidge or have a connection to her music or the people she sang or played with. As for me, I loved it!

WATCHING:

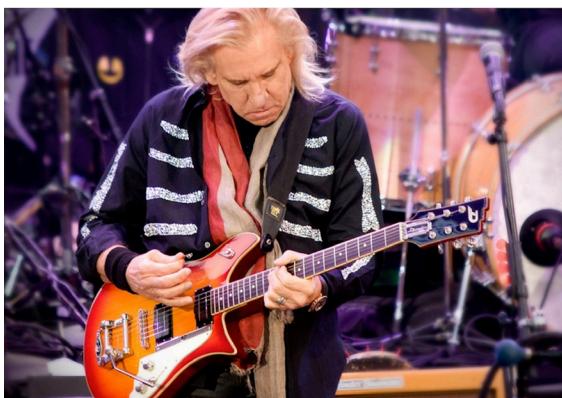
I was looking through the upcoming TV shows one evening when I noticed the AXS channel (569 on my Verizon FIOS service) was going to run something called ***Rocky Mountain Way*** later that night. That happens to be the title of one of my fave Joe Walsh songs and the listing



Vintage publicity photo of (left to right):
Vitale, Walsh & Passarelli, back in the day.

Colorado Music Hall of Fame and this show was part of their celebration. Even better, I got to see *Barnstorm* perform three amazing songs and their performances were nothing short of spectacular.

Even though Joe has been a member of the *Eagles* for many years, he has a rabid fan base of people who loved his earlier music with the *James Gang* and *Barnstorm*, as well as his solo days, and the crowd at this event were certainly vocal in their support. I was pleased to see that Joe Vitale (on drums) and Kenny Passarelli (on bass) were both still alive—their original album was recorded at Colorado's Caribou Ranch Studios back in 1972 after all—and in fine form. Several other musicians backed them at this show but for the life of me I can't find their names through numerous searches. One contributor to an online discussion group stated that "Tom Bukovic (guitar) and probably Jimmy Wallace (keyboards) from Joe's current touring band" would be joining them.



Recent photo of Walsh (by Tina Hagerling of The Know).

said that he and his old band, *Barnstorm*, were going to be featured (among others) so I set my DVR to record it. My interest had been piqued!

When I checked it out the next day I was pleasantly surprised to find that Joe and his old band were among the 2017 inductees at the Colorado

Way' also featured performances from Garth Brooks, Amy Grant & Vince Gill, the *Nitty Gritty Dirt Band*, Richie Furay, John Oates, Michael Martin Murphey and others paying tribute to the late Fogelberg and Caribou Ranch, the legendary recording studio."

If you see this show listed in your TV guide, you might want to tune in and give it a look. To read more about *Barnstorm* check out: http://www.songplaces.com/Rocky_Mountain_Way/Caribou_Ranch_Nederland_Colorado/.

Ro and I had heard good things about ***The Greatest Showman***, the movie about the life and times of P.T. Barnum, whose name will forever be associated with the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Every time we tried to borrow it from our library or rent it from Red Box, though, it was always "out of stock" until one day when we got lucky. I'm happy to say it was worth the wait.



This 2017 musical biopic stars Hugh Jackman as the adult Barnum (Ellis Rubin plays the young man), Michelle Williams as his wife, and a strong supporting cast including Rebecca Ferguson as Jenny Lind, a famous Swedish singer known as the "Swedish Nightingale." It was written by Jenny Bicks and Bill Condon, and directed by Michael Gracey. The film documents Barnum's struggles to succeed in the entertainment business and subsequent rise to fame and fortune before losing it all and having to rebuild with the help of a close friend. The movie had mixed reviews from critics and moviegoers but it was nominated for Best Motion Picture by the Golden Globe Awards. The tune, "This Is Me," by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, won an Academy Award for Best Original Song.

Although the plot is said to be largely fabricated, Ro and I found the film entertaining and the performances were excellent. I found the story moved along quite quickly and the hour and 45-minutes flew by while watching it. We would both recommend it if you haven't already seen it.

READING (ZINES) a sample:

I read a review of **Polar Vortex** in a recent issue of Xerography Debt and found that Richie had lots more zines that all sounded interesting so we worked out a multiple-zine trade including back issues.

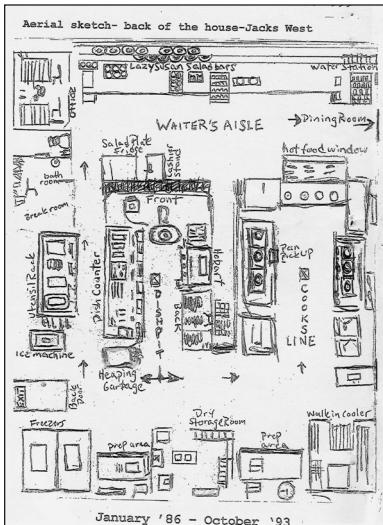
Polar Vortex is actually RBP (a Richie Blakmor Production) #2 and was first published in the winter of 2013-2014; it's all about this guy's passion for bicycling and, in particular, riding his bike to work. During the winter. In Michigan. Yes, sounds crazy, right? But it all makes for a great read and there are some cool photos included as well.

One of Richie's other zines (RBP #6) was released in 2017; it's appropriately titled, ***Crash***, and chronicles – what else? – his getting hit by a car while biking to work. Luckily, he survived but the long road back to health was not easy. He was also fortunate to be able to work from home for a while to aid in his eventual return to a normal lifestyle.

Miscellaneous Recollections was #4 in the series, from Spring, 2015. This issue includes some of Richie's earlier poems, essays or vignettes, all collected here as a kind of retrospect. He writes about past jobs, the death of a pet, politics and people, and his 4-year old daughter's first dance recital, amongst other things.

But the highlight of the package I received from Richie was his 2013 tome, ***Dreams Of Dirty Dishes (Tales from the dish pit and beyond)***. This is a 78-page epic in which he tells the story of growing up, coming of age, and working various jobs – including that of a dishwasher – in Verona, Wisconsin (a suburb of Madison).

Some of you may have read the zines produced many years ago by a guy who called himself, "Dishwasher Pete;" those zines were eventually



ally compiled into a book. Rich's story is akin to Pete's but, of course, very different; they both include fascinating tales of everyday life experiences.

I will warn you though that the size of the text on the printed page is very small. When I decided early on that this was going to be a worthwhile read, I simply blew up each digest-sized page on my copier to letter size (two-sided), and stapled them together in two batches. You may think that was a lot of work but it was worth it! To order any of Richie's zines, contact: Richieblakmor@qmail.com.

Another zine I read a review of was **STEWBREW** #5, a collaboration between Max Clotfetter and Kelly Froh, and promptly arranged to trade for it. It seems Kelly's mom had gifted her an 11-year old Scion XA but she had to fly out to Wisconsin, pick it up, and drive it back to Seattle. This issue includes all the related stories to that adventure.

There are lots of photos, cut & pasted articles, and drawings throughout the pages; a couple of comic-style stories have that Robert Crumb art feel to them. It's 32 digest-sized pages, with a color cover wrap, and totally worth the \$4 price tag; if you're interested, contact max-clotfetter@gmail.com or frohkelly@gmail.com to get your own copy.

Karla Keffler has released a new zine called ***SHRINKS; a Retrospect***. It's all about the half-dozen psychiatrists Karla has been treated by over some thirty-five years, and how each one interacted with her. Each subject is represented by a cartoon portraiture and, reading about the various therapists Karla describes, it's obvious that some of these professionals need help themselves.

This is a 6-inch square format, with 20 pages; for your own copy, contact: therealramonazine.com.

Liz Mason runs the Quimby's Zine Shop in Chicago and still has time to produce some zines of her own. Her latest effort is ***Awesome Things*** and she's already released issues #1 and 2; they're minis (4 1/4 x 5 1/2-inch) with 32 pages each. There are small illustrations, clip art or photos throughout, and plenty of examples of what Liz considers awesome things, like, "getting into a new band/artist with a tremendous back catalog to research," or "animals that let you touch them," or "coming up with a good analogy."

I was amazed at how many of these types of things Liz could think up and fill a zine with – but she's done it *twice!* It's certainly a unique concept so I'd advise you to check them out for yourself. Simply email Liz at caboosezine@gmail.com for prices and more info.

Holly F. is an artist who produces very colorful and original drawings, paintings, and other types of images in a zine she dubs **LATIBULE ART**. Her style varies widely from page to page, with some images having small bits of text included, as if to state an idea that the image was created around... certainly very original and obviously a talented woman.

The issue I checked out had a "Hello, my name is: spaced out" sticker on the cover; I don't know if that depicts the issue number. To find out more, contact: latibuleart@gmail.com or find her on Instagram @latibuleart.

The Great Solar Scam

I've been a big fan of clean, renewable, energy from the first time I heard of it. Wind, solar, and other potential alternatives are not only cleaner ways to generate energy, but carry much less risk than the traditional methods.

I would have certainly considered installing solar panels on our roof if it weren't for the cost involved. Even with government subsidies over the past recent years, a typical installation could still run you between ten and thirty thousand dollars.

So, when a neighbor/friend on our block recently told me she was signing up for "free" solar, I listened. She said it wasn't going to cost her any money out of pocket and her monthly electric bills could be reduced up to 40%. I immediately called the guy who was doing her installation and asked for more information.

Two guys came over to our house and gave us the pitch. They did an assessment of our house, determining where the most effective place to mount the solar panels was, and asked for a copy of our previous year's electric company's bills. After calculating all the figures, they told me I could save up to 40% on my yearly cost. And it wouldn't cost me anything out of pocket for the installation.

The way that works is this: by signing up for this deal, you're locked into a 20-year lease agreement to pay for the solar panels and their installation (you didn't think they were free, did you?). The way they make it doable is that those payments become part of your monthly electric bill so, theoretically, you won't feel it.

But, you pay for whatever power (kilowatt/hours) your system produces (in our case, that would have been .17¢ per kWh, plus tax) but the cost escalates by 2.9% per year. If you generate more power than you use, you can "bank" it with the local electric company (PSEG in our case); that means, if we don't produce enough in a given month, we can take that banked power back from PSEG at no additional cost. The problem is that if you produce more than you use on a constant basis, you're paying for more than you're using and, at the end of the year, your banked power is lost. I've since read that the power companies are changing their rules and, in the future, you might not be able to make an even swap of power with them; they may charge you a fee for using your banked kWhs. Of course, if you don't produce enough, you must still pay your electric company for whatever additional power you need.

During the initial sales talk, I thought it sounded good and said we would think about it and get back to them. One of the sales guys said, "Well, if you're seriously considering it, I'd suggest you sign a few preliminary

papers so that, if you do decide to go with the plan, that will be out of the way. So, I signed some forms on an iPad and was told they'd send me copies the next day.

Big mistake! And I'll admit it.

The next day, I received the papers in an email and, guess what? One of the papers I signed was actually a contract to install the system. I immediately called the guy and screamed at him over the phone. "Not a problem," he told me, "you can cancel at any time."

Which I did. But I really should have reported this maneuver to the NYS Attorney General's office.

At that point I knew I would never deal with *that* particular company, but a day later, we had a knock on our door. It was *another* solar system company rep. He, of course, told me all kinds of bad things about that other company and touted the benefits of dealing with *his* company.

For one thing, his company only required a customer to pay for the power that was *used*, as opposed to the total power *produced*. The drawback to their contract, however, was that, if we decided to sell our house, the buyer would have to agree to the terms of the solar contract for the balance of the 20 years. Plus, if that buyer's credit rating was below a certain number, the finance company could reject him/her and we wouldn't be able to sell our house to that person. When I mentioned my dissatisfaction with this clause to the rep, he actually went and found a different finance company that would allow *anyone* to buy my house, regardless of their credit (he *really* wanted to make this deal!).

But my current (PSEG budget plan) electric bill is \$151 a month; the new projected bill was \$131. I stood to save just 13% – \$20 per month – by installing the solar system with this company. To be locked into a 20-year agreement and not know for sure if I was even going to realize the savings calculated, I decided it wasn't worth the time and trouble.

Ironically, after this whole episode took place, our local paper (Newsday) printed an extensive article on how these scams are being marketed on Long Island. There are additional articles online:
<https://www.scam-detector.com/article/solar-panels-fraud>



(Input & Feedback – Continued from page 4)

leaping from a great height to some window sill- & wacking it full in the chest and then not just bouncing off it to your death below - well that's Mission Impossible! Also, our hero finally manages to climb back to the top of a cliff he fell from and then he rolls on his back and just lay there fading in and out of consciousness - *at the edge!* Why dontcha roll over a little way more from that sheer drop before ya go to sleep! *Doom koff!*

Well, thanks for reviewing Dith Dood #48 and 49 in XD #43. Much appreciated. Well, since that time I have been cut free from my job at FedEx and have spent the last few months pumping out insane cartoon filled Dithering Doodles for the masses to enjoy!



24th of July "Pioneer Day" celebrations. Arrrgh! Guess I'm turning into an old curmudgeon! And #65, uhhhhh... hard to categorize! You don't have to review all of 'em! It's all overkill!

Anyway, hope all is swell with you and Ro healthwise & otherwise... well, off I go to the post office.

Later Gater,
Steve

(Steve Anderson produces the always amusing Dithering Doodles;
email him at PremiumDeluxe@hotmail.com for more info. –Ken)

Aug. 9, 2018

Ken!

I am a terrible trader. I'm so far behind on zine projects, it's a wonder I got this issue of B&B out before the current season ended.

Your zines are always a treat to read, and I enjoy your columns and reviews in XD. Keep up the great work.

Best, David

P.S. Gabe has *After Jackie* on his reading list.

(David LeBounty produces the always enjoyable Bookstores and Baseball zine; for more info or to order, write Blue Cubicle Press, PO Box 250382, Plano, TX 75025-0382. –Ken)

(I also heard from: Liz Mason. –Ken)

Here's the following:
#51 - documents how I lost my job at FedEx! #55 - I just thought you'd like the drawing I rendered of an Arctic Circle restaurant/Drive In, in 1954 Salt Lake City. #63 covers the hazards of living here in Salt Lake as we have not only the 4th of July to endure neighborhood pyrotechnics but we also have the

Ken's Facts Of Life:



In Connecticut, it's illegal to call a brined cucumber a pickle unless it will bounce after being dropped from a height of a foot.

mental_floss