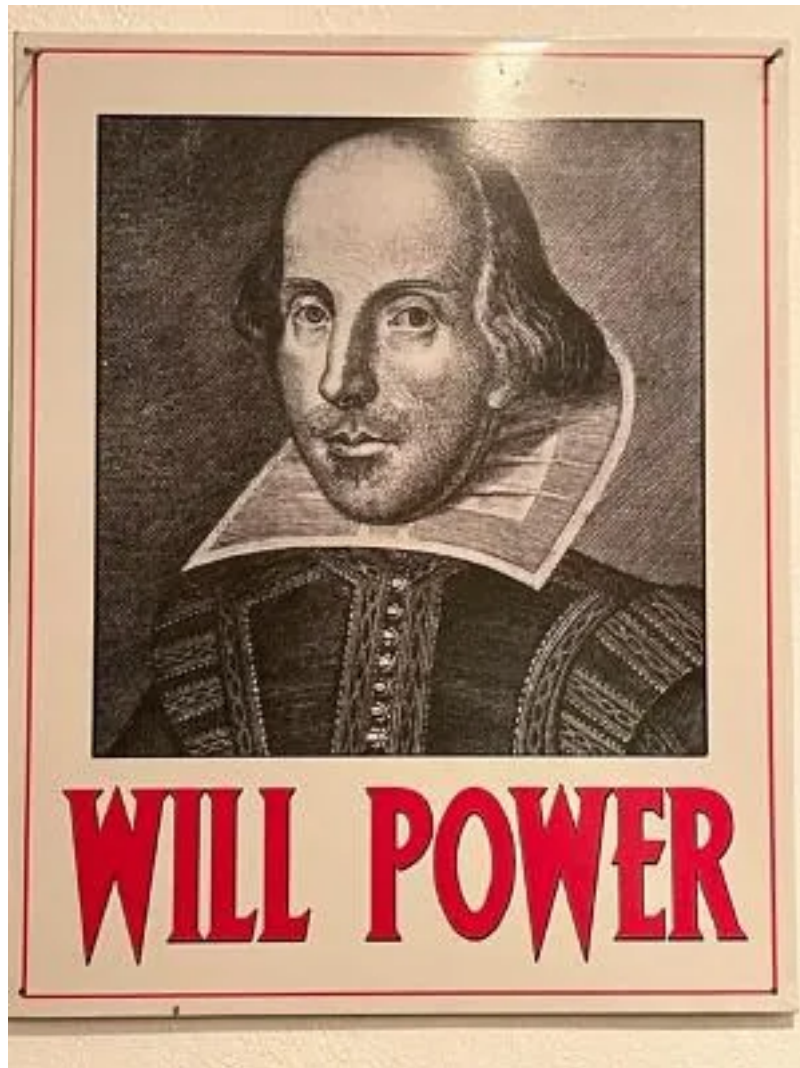


I Love Kitschy

April 30, 2022



After work yesterday evening, Lisa and I had to go to the southern end of Longmont and since we were in the area we stopped at Habitat for Humanity to see what treasures we may discover. I was looking for a replacement picture frame for a photo of us with Lucian and Scarlett and found the perfect one for a couple of bucks. But in that same area I came across this metallic poster and I knew I just had to have it.

Yes, it is "Kitschy" in every sense of the word:

ADJECTIVE

(of art, objects, or design) considered to be in poor taste because of excessive garishness or sentimentality, but sometimes appreciated in an ironic or knowing way:"kitschy souvenir shops".

But being a major fan of WS, I could not help myself, and it now adorns one of the walls in my office at chair height so I can see it easily when I put my feet up on the corner of my desk - which is 90% of time - as that slouching posture helps rush the blood to my head so I can think better.

Got an email this morning from a friend-of-a-friend (now a direct friend who identifies herself as blog reader "#6" - and I kinda like how she challenges "Claire's Theorem") Yvette Benson (grew up on the other side of the Grand Concourse with the Collins family and Jimmy Whitelaw and his now wife of many years, Jayceree), who informed me that she finished KMAG and left me a review, but on B&N, because she likes to support brick & mortar shops. Since I am also a big fan of b&m B&N, I spent most of my lunchtimes with Bob Mulvey (RIP) back in the GF&M days during the late 80s/early 90s sitting in some aisle thumbing through many of their books, I was thrilled that Yvette chose to buck the vocal majority and post on their site. If KMAG is only going to have one review on B&N, I am thrilled with the one Yvette left there. Thanks Yvette! Support b&m stores, they are making a comeback: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/27/world/brick-and-mortar-stores-staged-a-comeback-in-2021.html>. They help build communities.

Anyway, while I was waiting out front of the house for Lisa, Smokey popped out of his/her bomb shelter and came over for an afternoon cuddle:







I mean, how can I resist that face? Those eyes control my mind. It always makes me feel magical and definitely lowers my blood pressure. Smokey's purr is the true music of the spheres. When we returned from our Longmont trip, the wind had returned so I went out on the back deck to check on Claire and Honey. I found them in the backyard shielding themselves from the wind with my workshop.



I love how they know just how to pose for the camera. Fame. I could hear Claire stage whisper "Ccchhhheeeeeeesseeeee!" The official McCaffrey rabbit warren sits under that workshop (I made the contractor set it on 6x6 wooden beams on top of the concrete pad so they could easily access it.) The main entrance is just below Mike Moulten's bench (a Riverdale Clan member and Justice Silver's - also a dear friend - Court Clerk from TWA) in the photo just behind Claire's ass. The bench works as a canopy that keeps the smaller bunnies protected from overhead predators. Claire and Honey look like a couple of bouncers that ensure only bunnies pass through that portal.

Anyway, I then led my two mule family members into the side paddock and down to their barn with a large bag of their dinner carrots and apples, and got them settled for the evening. I have to get their outdoors chores done early today because I have to attend a community meeting at 9:30 am, so my weekly food prep will have to wait until tomorrow morning. Needs must!

Well, I have things to do and people to see, so I must flee. First a cuddle and my rounds.

But before I sign off, one last photo of Jeter and Blue on my office floor yesterday. Since they find what I do pretty boring, they often spend the office hours sleeping.



I don't blame them.

You fine, five readers go out there and make the most of your Saturday.

And have a great one!

P.S.: Congrats to BC & Nan's daughter, Beth, on her graduation from the BA part of the Pharmacy School program.

Four years done. Two more to go in the six year program for the white coat. Well done all around.

Cairo's Back For A Visit - Celestial Happenings

April 29, 2022



Luke and Georgie's Mastiff, Cairo, a wonderful NYC rescue, has come for a visit while the family takes a weekend road trip in the Pacific Northwest. Blue is ecstatic. Jeter is nonplussed, and barks to demand to be moved to the couch or recliners just so he won't be rolled over. Cairo loves to visit his cousins.

Unfortunately Cairo hates the stairs so, when he goes outside with the other dogs in the morning from the basement, after coaxing him down those basement stairs with promises of food, he will run

around the western side of the house and wait outside the dining room door to be let in, which means I have to hit those stairs two more times than I want to. Oh well.

It also means that during his visit I have to sleep in the livingroom on the first floor on my couch, because he doesn't like the stairs to the tower. His stairs at home are all carpeted and ours have tile so traveling up or down them freaks him out. So he crashes in Blue's floor bed and Blue and I take the couch (Blue always bogarts the comfortable end). Jeter sleeps in his floor bed next to Cairo. Lisa gets our King Sized Bed all to herself, *sans* my snoring. I get the short straw again.

And if I try to leave Cairo alone on the first floor he wines, loudly and incessantly. So I just bite the bullet and kip on the couch. It's only a weekend. Thank God for Relief Factor, for as comfortable as my couch is, its not a bed.

The first of the three day cycle for the new moon starts tonight.

This one is called a black moon and there are all kinds of celestial happenings in conjunction with its arrival, including a partial solar eclipse, planet alignment and a meteor shower later in the week:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/science/rare-black-moon-to-cause-a-first-solar-eclipse-of-2022-ahead-of-eid-venus-jupiter-conjunction-meteor-shower-to-follow/2507872/>

I hear the coyotes out there in the foothills this early morning.

Must get my intention candles burning *tout suite*.



Done!

This is going to be big.

And its Friday!!!!

So if you fine, five readers need to start some important new personal project, or to bring something new into your life, now is a good time to take that first step.

Well, I've got those candles going, so its off for a kitty cuddle and then to make my rounds. So I must flee.

You all have Friday's wind at your back, so go out there and make today a great one.

God's Fingernail

April 28, 2022



I cannot recall the first time I referred to the last stages of the waning moon as God's fingernail. It's no doubt something I heard my parents or grandparent's say while pointing at the night sky at some distant point during my youth. It's weird, but I only use the term at the last stages of the waning moon, as it shrinks to the left, and never the waxing moon. Maybe because the waning moon has that feeling of trying to hang on to that little bit of light just before total darkness. That's the tenacity I want my God to bring to the table.

My version of God is loosely based upon, but not limited to, the requirements imposed by the superceding tenets of the Catholic church I grew up in. My God must be "omnipotent," "perfect," "loving."

Those three prerequisites alone render the other listed traits shared in religious texts to be the anthropomorphization of an entity mere humans could not quite get their collective heads around.

Science doesn't rule out the existence of my God. Something existed before the Big Bang. It took a lot of sentient, focused energy to pull that off, which ticks my "omnipotent" box.

And when I say God, I'm not talking about the hoary headed male figure that adorns the ceiling of the Sistene Chapel. I cannot assign a distinct gender to my God. If God made man and woman in its image, well then, God must share all of our traits. As much as I enjoy my maleness, and I do, I am fully cognizant of my gender's limitations (and I'm not here to debate the issue of whether gender is a construct - everyone is entitled to their own thoughts on that matter, not to be imposed on, or by, others, and each person has the freedom to live their life as they see fit - but for me, I'm deferring to my natural biological state and the plumbing that comes along with it). A "perfect" God is so much more than me.

A "loving" God is just that. I cannot accept that my loving God would feel any jealousy if I didn't worship it on a weekly basis, given that chronological time means nothing to an omnipotent entity that existed before time, and thus wouldn't limit itself with such a petty construct. God is in it for the long game. And I can reach out to my God directly without a broker to make my deals for me. And I tell my God how grateful I am everyday for all that I have received.

Accepting the teaching that I am an imperfect creation of God, my perfect God does not expect perfection from me, and therefore does not judge me when I come up short. God knows what tools it has given the unique me. If I am born with one arm, God cannot expect me to juggle, at least not as well as the person with two. My God expects me to do my best with what I have. Given my natural limitations, God knows there will be mistakes along the way. I do my best.

At the same time, I don't believe God has put a cap on my lifelong endeavour to fully master my abilities. I believe humans have only begun to scratch the surface of reaching their full potential. What once was called magic, now falls within the ever expanding sphere of quantum physics.

And given that my God has power that I cannot fully conceptualize, then anything is possible, including its creation of non-human entities that function and exist on a completely different energy level, or on different planets, or in different galaxies, that all resulted from that Big Bang. An omnipotent God is not a one trick pony.

So when I look up in the night sky and spot God's fingernail, I appreciate that it is a sign that we are not alone on this trip. And that makes me happy.

Well, its Thursday and I have things to do and a kitty to cuddle, so I am off.

You fine, five readers go out there and use today wisely.

And have a great day.

Hope You Feel Better Lenny - COVID Sucks

April 27, 2022



Despite 2X2 Shots and Boosters, Lenny apparently has been hit with a mean dose of COVID. Lenny has completed a recent non-stop stretch of brutal work which would bring any lesser man low, so his immune system would be challenged. BC, whose wife Nan, also jabbed and boosted, just recently suffered through a bout of it, suggested asking Lenny's doctor for a regimen of the anti-viral, Paxlovid, which BC claims to have worked miracles. BC attests that Nan is already back on her feet and finding reasons to be angry with him, and because this is just the kind of guy BC is, he's gone out of his way to make that last part easy on her. BC has also donned a red striped shirt in solidarity with Lenny's recent Where's Waldo theme.



Prayers for Lenny's quick recovery. And for Nan.
Joe, it's great to report, is enjoying his healthy retirement by slinging sly Limericks and supervising his lovely wife Donna's work around his home in upstate NY.



Hydration is key. Speaking of clothing, I understand Joe likes to supervise his wife in the nude.

Finally, to complete this OFC COVID theme, Eileen's son, Tiger, has returned from an extended stay in Amsterdam after a positive COVID test kept him from getting on a plane a week ago. Doctors have said that Tiger's "euphoric state of mellow" - a well known COVID symptom - should dissipate right about the time his sense of smell returns.

All kidding aside, feel better Lenny. Oh, and God Bless Nan and Tiger. COVID sucks!

Well, it's another hump day, so let's go get over it. I'm carrying a skate board with me because I feel like cruising down the other side.

But first a stop at the grotto for some kitty cuddles and then my rounds.

The rest of my fine, five readers, stay well.

And have a great day.

Me & You And A Dog Named Blue

April 26, 2022



Love our dog Blue. That's her enjoying a little sunshine out back by Gepetto's Studio on Saturday, supervising the mule muffin collection. Unlike Jeter who never wanders more than a few feet from the humans, Blue will go out and hang with the mules and will even roll with them in the dust spots. Blue loves to groom Claire's legs and the two will stand out there for hours, with Blue directly underneath Claire working on all four legs. Blue will often just wander through the property on her own, stop and take a nap, and then come back to the house when she is good and ready. If the basement door is not open, she'll come around the side and wait at the dining room or back deck door until someone lets her in. And if the door is open, she'll come find you in the house and nuzzle your hand until you give her head a rub, acknowledge her existence. There is a spot in the fencing between the yard and the back property where Phoeby (RIP) first formed a hole and Blue widened it to allow her passage without coming through a gate. When we go out to feed Claire and Honey, Blue hits the hole and runs ahead to let the mules know their meal is coming. But come bedtime she loves to snuggle and will often climb under the blankets and lean up against Lisa or me, often pushing us to the edges of the bed. And she loves to overwhelm you on the recliner because she loves to cuddle. Blue would protect anyone in our family to the death, despite the fact that she has never been taught that she should. It's

instinctual. You'd die for your family, blood or stray. She is a great dog.

She's come a long way from that freezing night in the snow storm in the Bronx where someone tied that black puppy to a fence where she was discovered, shivering, by an officer in our son Mark's then NYPD precinct. One phone call later she joined our ranks.

But my father taught us that strays make the best family members.

They don't always stick around but, like healthy family, they come and go to do their own thing. Dad always left the door unlocked for them (except BC, who liked to come in through the kitchen window - he would have made one hell of a burglar). The telltale sign that you had transitioned to family was weekend nights, if you were at the house, you were never asked to stay for dinner, the family just set a place for you at the table.

And like a stray, I have joined other families during wanderings from my own. The Collins Clan always accepted me as one of their own when I was transitioning from a feral to domesticated creature, although I still howl at the full moon. When I was younger, the Vaughans always made me feel welcome in their home. They invited me for sleepovers, took me on vacations and taught me to aspire to and appreciate the finer things in life. They always made me feel smart enough to do whatever I set my sights on. They made me believe I could be a lawyer. And through that inter-familial contact, you always take something with you when you leave, that variation of love, adding it to the mix you ultimately apply when you start your own family.

Well, speaking of family, its time to go cuddle my stray Kittie, then do my rounds.

The rest of your fine, five readers, take a moment to reach out to your families, blood and stray, to let them know your thinking about them.

But most of all, have a great day.

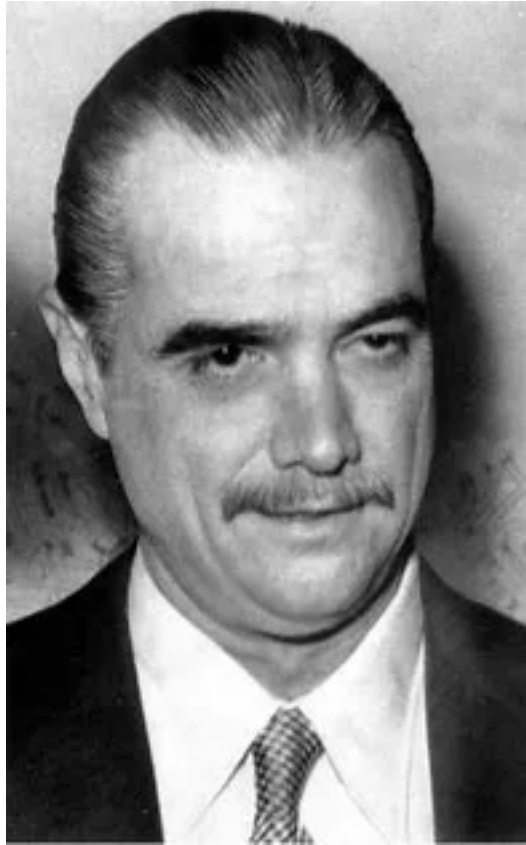
Stein - CCB - Hummingbirds

April 25, 2022



Stein is a silent member of the OFC. He was the first of the OFC to reach out to me through this website and contributed a number of the old photos from back in the day. He swears he has a cache of others.

I am beginning to wonder about Stein. For example, Stein's copy of KMAG went out with the rest of the OFC's copies on March 30th, and yet it did not arrive until Friday April 22nd. When he showed me the envelope, I could not help but notice ink stamps on it from places like Mumbai, Burundi and number of places written in farsi. When I insisted that he send me a "proof of life" photo, I received the above. I am beginning to wonder if Stein is actually Howard Hughes. Look at that pencil mustach.



The likeness is uncanny. And it would explain Stein's cool muscle car collection.

Indeed, Stein has not aged since we were in our teens.



I did consider for a NYC minute that it could be Stein's lovely wife, Delia, pulling a *Weekend At Bernie's* stunt. Those sunglasses are a clue. Then I received this cryptic text message late yesterday afternoon:

"Aliens 🙄 don't age!"

so I stopped asking questions. I dare not delve any further into this mystery at this point. But I'm glad I did include Stein as one of the bad guys in KMAG.

So switching gears to one of my more recent vintage of friends, my dear friend Christy Cooper-Burnett made a time traveling appearance from yesteryear in full costume to the LA Times Festival of Books to promote her Time Traveling Trilogy - No Way Home, Finding Home, Escaping Home -

Cancel



Tweet



Here's my dear friend and brilliant author Christy Cooper Burnett at this weekend's LA times Festival do Books. If you are in LA today (Sunday) stop by her booth, say hello, snap a selfie and buy some of her amazing novels. And preorder her newest novel, it is fucking amazing.



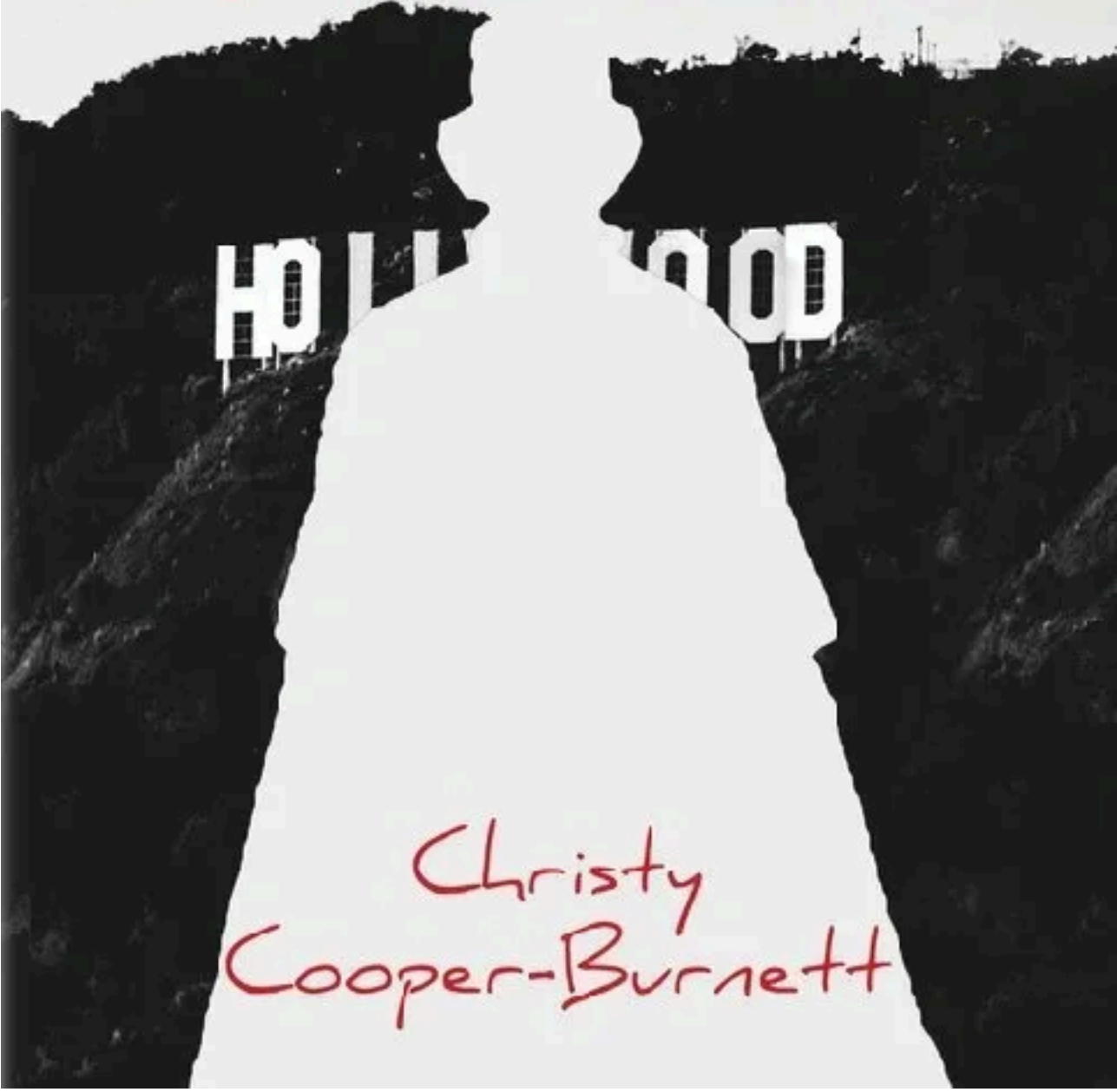
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For the record she is sitting down, and is actually quite tall. Love the hat CCB!

She was also propmoting her soon to be released novel, *Passport To Terror*, which has brilliantly meshed the *Jack The Ripper* legend with time travel: <https://www.blackrosewriting.com/scifi/passporttoterror?rq=Christy%20Cooper%20Burnett>

PASSPORT TO TERROR

Passport Time Travel Series | Book One



HOLLYWOOD

Christy
Cooper-Burnett

If you are a JTR aficionado - or if you just love a great story - this is a book not to miss. It drops in September.

Finally, after finishing my cleaning the basement duties and fixing the slide bolt lock on the side paddock - thank you wind - I decided to hang up a hummingbird feeder that took forever to arrive. I was out unraveling, untangling and repairing all of my wind chimes on Jack the Spruce and decided it was time to break out the HBF. I tried hanging it on JTS, but I could not get it level. So I hung it in a prominent spot outside the kitchen window.



And still could not get it perfectly level. Well, perfect gets in the way of good.

Cue the Hummingbirds. Will keep you posted. Side note, it is almost impossible to fill, given that as you try to pour your secret HB nectar into one end, it squirts out of 12 HB holes, but I will figure it out. If not, I'll just ask the fairies to fix it for me.

Anyway, it is Monday. . . again. . . so I must return to reality during my NYC office hours.

The rest of my fine, five readers take that deep breath and go out and face the world.

But have a great day.

Never Shovel Shit On A Windy Day

April 24, 2022



Yesterday was a continuation of a very windy Spring. Not only do you need to tie your gates closed but you also need to tie them open if you are allowing your tenants full access to the property.

Otherwise a suddenly swinging gate can spook them. Or worse, hit you in the ass when you least expect it at an incredible speed. It still looks rather stark, as the buds are just barely beginning to appear on the trees and the spring grass is just breaking the surface.

But wind and aesthetics aside, Saturdays are for weekly veggie/fruit prep and then outdoor chores, which means restocking the hay bags, hay rack and water troughs and then shovelling mule muffins.

I've developed ergonomic patterns for the collection duty. Start with the inside of the barn, work around its exterior, including the corridor

right behind it that they treat like a roman multi-seat commode, and then the rest of the side paddock. Then I move to the southern end - closest to the house- of the back property. The mules love to poop in certain areas. The above shot of the backyard area was taken yesterday from the top of the back property where I had stopped to collect a few piles, while watching my mules hard at work reloading. Living with my wife, the nurse, I have become familiar with a chart notation called "i/o" which basically measures a patient's intake and output as one of the barometers of their health. Claire and Honey are very healthy.

Anyway, I almost used the buffeting winds as my excuse to blow off the outdoor chores. I could have gotten a note from my wife, given that it was concededly too windy to put out the back deck furniture, but I knew that it would be only putting off the inevitable. No one was going to sub in and do it for me.

I realized once I got outside that I had never experienced performing outside chores in such high winds.

But first a primer on mule poop.

Mules are prodigious poopers. Fresh poop arrive in these heavy piles of dozens of shiny brown kidney shaped items each about the size of a child's fist. They are adhesive to one another so you can lift a good size amount on one scooper forkful to flip into the wheelbarrow. I now understand why Spaghetti, having grown up on an Irish farm, had forearms like a lowland gorilla.

Anyway, given the relatively arid weather, and given the amount of hay the animal consumes, those muffins quickly dry into either stone hard projectiles or breakdown into a then hardened pile of splinters of brown hay salad.

Shearing wind, I have found, raises havoc with both forms.

Rule one. Never stand down wind to your wheelbarrow.

If you don't follow rule one, the shearing wind propels the hardened nuggets off the prongs of your raised scooper directly at you like a gattling gun, or it turns the hay-shit salad into a large brown disgusting cloud of detritus which causes you to cover every facial orifice as quickly as you can or you may never get the resulting shit shards out of your eyes, ears, nose or mouth. Thank God I am bald, but my once white beard looked like a Just For Men after photo.

Rule two. Lessen the arc. I have discovered that the only way to actually get any of the mule shit into the wheelbarrow is to stand upwind and use a more reduced arc from ground to just over the lip of the barrow. The movement must be quick and the wrist motion sharp.

Rule three. Lessen the distance. You have to have the barrow positioned immediately beside the offending pile. Any attempts to carry a load more than a step causes it to disappear off the end of you fork.

Well that combination doubled my outdoor time. I also got a slight sunburn on the top of my head because my hat kept blowing off.

But it is done. I have engaged in a new Green Acres' experience.

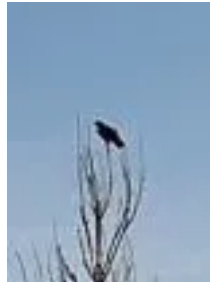
And now I have to go cuddle a kitty and then my rounds.

So you fine, five readers enjoy your day of rest.

And make it a great one.

Leap And The Net Will Appear. . . .

April 23, 2022



I was driving home yesterday after dropping Lisa at work and I spotted this beautiful Hawk as it swooped down over this large field to my right and then rose up and landed precariously on the top of a tree. It was so beautiful, that I pulled over and tried to capture a photo of it. The above poor enlargement is of the photo below:



But the good news is that the original gives you a better sense of scale to show just how large the bird was.

Anyway, the Hawk was also obviously on a schedule, because no sooner did I snap that photo that he was off again.



Now this Hawk never doubted him/herself. It understood from experience that it had the tools and strength to leap off that tree top and fly, magnificently. I was so jealous of its confidence. Because that is what truly separates us from the rest of the sentient creatures on this earth. Humankind are burdened with the concept of doubt.

Is this going to work?

Can I really do this?

Do I have what it takes?

Which is why I've always loved that saying "Leap and the net will appear."

I first heard it uttered by my older sister, Veronica, who would trot it out as a bromide to cheer me on in whatever frightening endeavours I was engaged in. She has always been my biggest cheerleader. Despite the fact that I grew up suffering from chronic imposters syndrome (it's genetic to the Irish), it always seemed to be just what I needed to take that next leap of faith.

Later on, V admitted that she borrowed the concept from the American Naturalist and essayist, John Burroughs (although I have also heard it first attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - but those two men can fight it out in heaven). And that would make sense, because Burroughs was a man who would have watched a lot of creatures take flight.

Now, to be honest, it doesn't always work, like the time I leapt off the family garage as a kid. I'm pretty sure the impact to my legs probably destroyed my growth plates and accounts for why I am the shortest among my male siblings. And I have suffered other failures along the way.

But overall it was exactly the mantra that I needed to overcome my considerable self-doubt.

It's always that first step that is the hardest, whether it is out of the corner and towards the center of a ring, through a law firm doorway, out of the open portal of a plane, or off the edge of a cliff. But nothing worthwhile can happen without it.

Over the years, I have taken that leap of faith many times and ever single success I have had, personal and professional, even writing *The Claire Trilogy*, has began with the Bronx translation of that phrase. It goes like this: "Fuckit, I'll give it a shot."

Because there are no guarantees in life except one. If you don't take your shot, you are absolutely guaranteed not to accomplish that goal.

So go out there, each and every one of my fine, five readers, and take your shot.

Saturday chores await. And I have a kitty to cuddle.

Make this Saturday a great one.

Bee Steward

April 22, 2022



Yesterday evening my youngest son, Mark, proud member of the NYPD, faceted me while he was out tending to his bees at his home above the Tappansee. Mark is my Goldilocks child. When he wants to do something, he studies it, figures everything out and does it right the first time. That is so not McCaffrey. We tend to step right into something and get it wrong the first fifty times until there is nothing left for us to do but get it right. Our stubbornness is our failsafe.

Anyway, there has been a bee crisis in this country for a while now:

<https://www.panna.org/food-farming-derailed/bees-crisis> and <https://petpedia.co/bee-statistics/>

We would absolutely be screwed without them. So once Mark and Sara (also a member of NY's Finest) bought their own home with some property, he decided he was going to do his small part in stewarding the bees in his area. [https://](https://www.ormondbeachobserver.com/photo-gallery/bee-stewards-environmental-discovery-centers-beekeepers-strive-for-public-awareness-of-bees)

www.ormondbeachobserver.com/photo-gallery/bee-stewards-environmental-discovery-centers-beekeepers-strive-for-public-awareness-of-bees

He now has three hives. His neighbor also has hives so their area is in good stead.

There are all kinds of aftermarket benefits arising from Bee Stewardship. Of course there is the pollination we need to feed our world. <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/animals/bees.shtml>

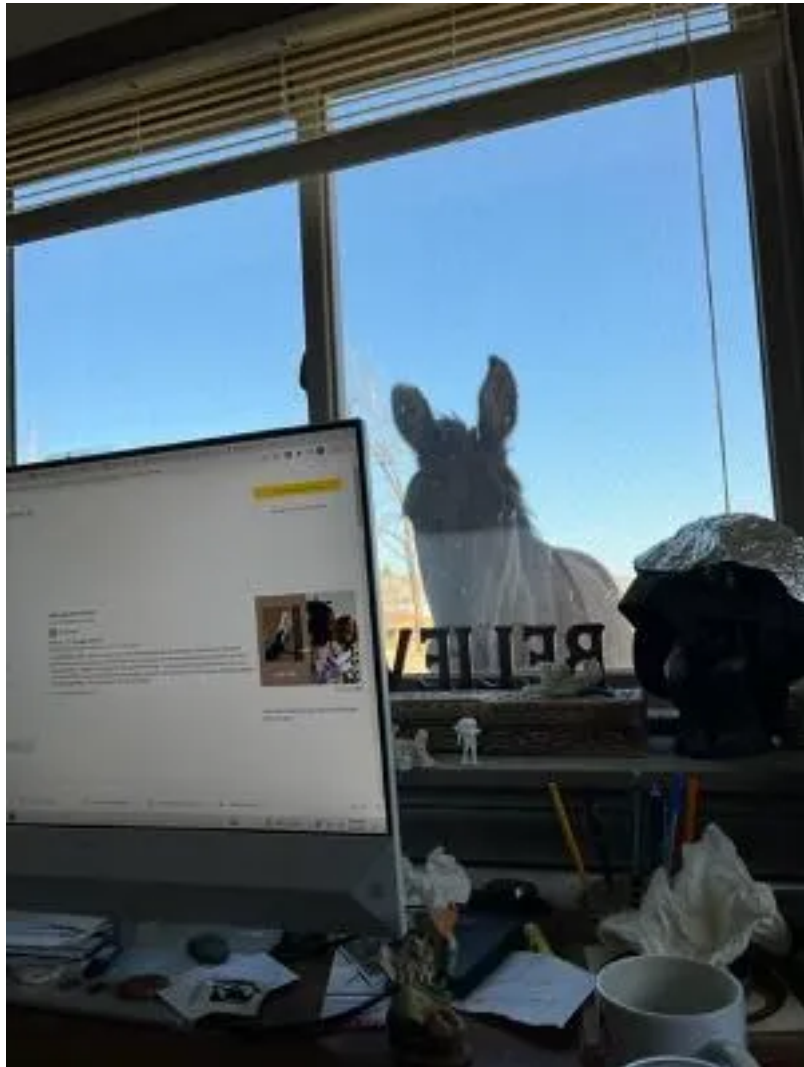
We all know the many values in honey, like weightloss: <https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/animal-product/benefits-of-honey-in-weight-loss.html>

And healing wounds: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8496555/>

And there is also value in Bee Venom: <https://www.ormondbeachobserver.com/photo-gallery/bee-stewards-environmental-discovery-centers-beekeepers-strive-for-public-awareness-of-bees>

Now I'll admit that I wouldn't have the nerve to do this job. But then again, I'm not sure I'd have the nerve to patrol the streets of NYC

today either, and I'm just glad that Mark has taken on both those roles. You find your heroes where they are most needed. I, like the bees, have my own steward.



Who makes sure I'm okay and doing my job everyday. And when I'm not doing my job, she reappears with back up.



At which time I have no choice but to do my job.



Which is to pay the tithe, or suffer the consequences. A whole wheelbarrow's worth.

I do want to give a promised shout out to Thursday, who has the remarkable attribute of allowing you to center yourself before the weekend, and get those last minute plans in place so no time is wasted. Thursday allows you to take care of those last important things for the week. Thursday is a keeper. I will no longer take you for granted or treat you as a doormat to Friday.

So yesterday Lisa and I stopped by Grandpas for breakfast so we could say hello to Grandpa's Boys, and also wish Mellissa (intentionally 8 letters) *bon chance*, as she will be leaving her post of 8 years as server extraordinaire at this wonderful breakfast venue, to pursue her first job in the legal profession. Well done young lady. Leave your soul at the door as you enter. The next time we meet, I will be serving her and she will be tipping me.

Speaking of coffee houses, after reading an interesting short story, I also bought 5 coffees (it's a thing) for a young Dutch writer in the Netherlands named Vincent van Zandvoort. Pay it forward. Twitter is constantly amazing me with its international reach. Good luck with your writing, Vincent. Who knows, you may go on to create the literary version of *The Starry Night*.

Lisa and I also were able to reach a decision on a property upgrade we had been mulling about. So Thursday proved itself very useful.

Well, welcome Friday. You minx. Go ahead and do your worst.

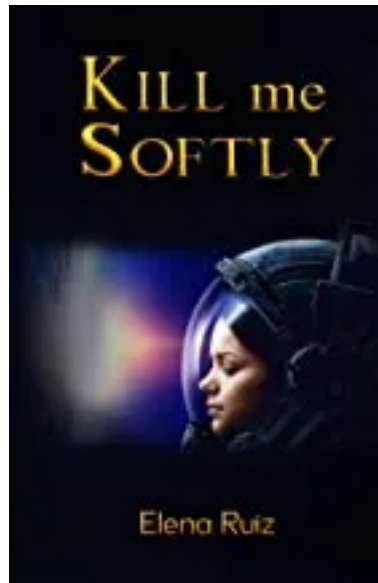
All of you out there, including my fine, five readers, storm the ramparts. The weekend awaits. *Audaces fortuna iuvat*.

But make this day a great one.

Now where did I leave that Kitty. . .

Poetry

April 21, 2022



I have always loved poetry. Poems are an art form that, through careful selection, collapses broad thoughts into essential words that evoke much larger images and feelings. Those words are an incantation, an invitation that allows you to step right into the soul of the poet. A Vulcan mind-meld. You suddenly share that poet's six senses, including their universal mind.

The shortest poem I could ever conceive would be two numbers: "9-11." There is an instant story to that numerical combination. But no two readers would ever see the same story.

A good poet wouldn't untether their reader like that. They would add just enough words to guide the reader down a certain path, to a particular view. Just enough to share their story, their specific vision. The unique spot where they stood on that particular day.

A good poem is like a shot of fine whisky, you can consume it in an instant, and then sit back and let its magic slowly rise through your body, open your mind and heighten your emotions. A collection of poetry can be intoxicating.

I've met a few poets in the Twitter Writers group, both published and unpublished. If given the opportunity, I'll always stop to sample their wares, like taking that taste of spaghetti sauce from a pot off the tip

of a wooden spoon. It always tastes great and sometimes exceptional.

Sure I have my favorites, like Rachel, once upon a time a Riverdalian, who will share her poetry in individual servings every once in a while. Again, an exceptional taste off the end of a wooden spoon, which you just can't walk past. Others, like Elena Ruiz, have gathered collections (I've greatly enjoyed the brilliance of both her published - above - and soon to be published collections), where you have to stop what you are doing and sit down and have a meal.

Female poets in particular are fascinating in how they can distill common emotions they share with their male counterparts in a such a unique way that it appears novel to us lesser males. At least to this one.

I am not a poet. I need more room, more words to capture a feeling. I need a much longer runway to take flight. I just don't have that surgical skill. I can fake it with a bawdy limerick that I will contribute to the open mic night - which is every night - on the OFC group texts. But that's just being clever and having fifty fun with my friends. And I could never be as clever as the other members of the OFC, like BC or Lenny, but especially Joe S, who is just a natural and can make you piss yourself with his cadence, word-play, and uniqueness of the pay-off line. And of course, Eileen C is Joe's eternal muse, and, will some day in the near future, give him the beating he deserves.

"There once was a lad named Serrano
Who was crushed by Eileen's piano."

A real poet is honest, they expose their soul to the reader. They share their deepest pain. The very idea of it gives me vertigo. So if you ever happen to come across a poem, stop and, like with a rose's bouquet, inhale it. You never know what memory or emotion it will trigger. It can let you time travel. Be young again. Feel. Love. Just like magic.

Well, my fine, five readers this old dog needs to go cuddle his kitty and then make his rounds.

I've just realized that Thursday must feel like the best friend of the most attractive girl/boy in the room. No matter the strength of their own qualities and beauty, people are always looking past it to

Friday. So today, I'm going to give Thursday its due. All the attention it deserves. I'll let you know what I find.
A demain. . . and have a great day!

Sheared Jeter - Funny Canadians - MB - Reading For/To Children

April 20, 2022

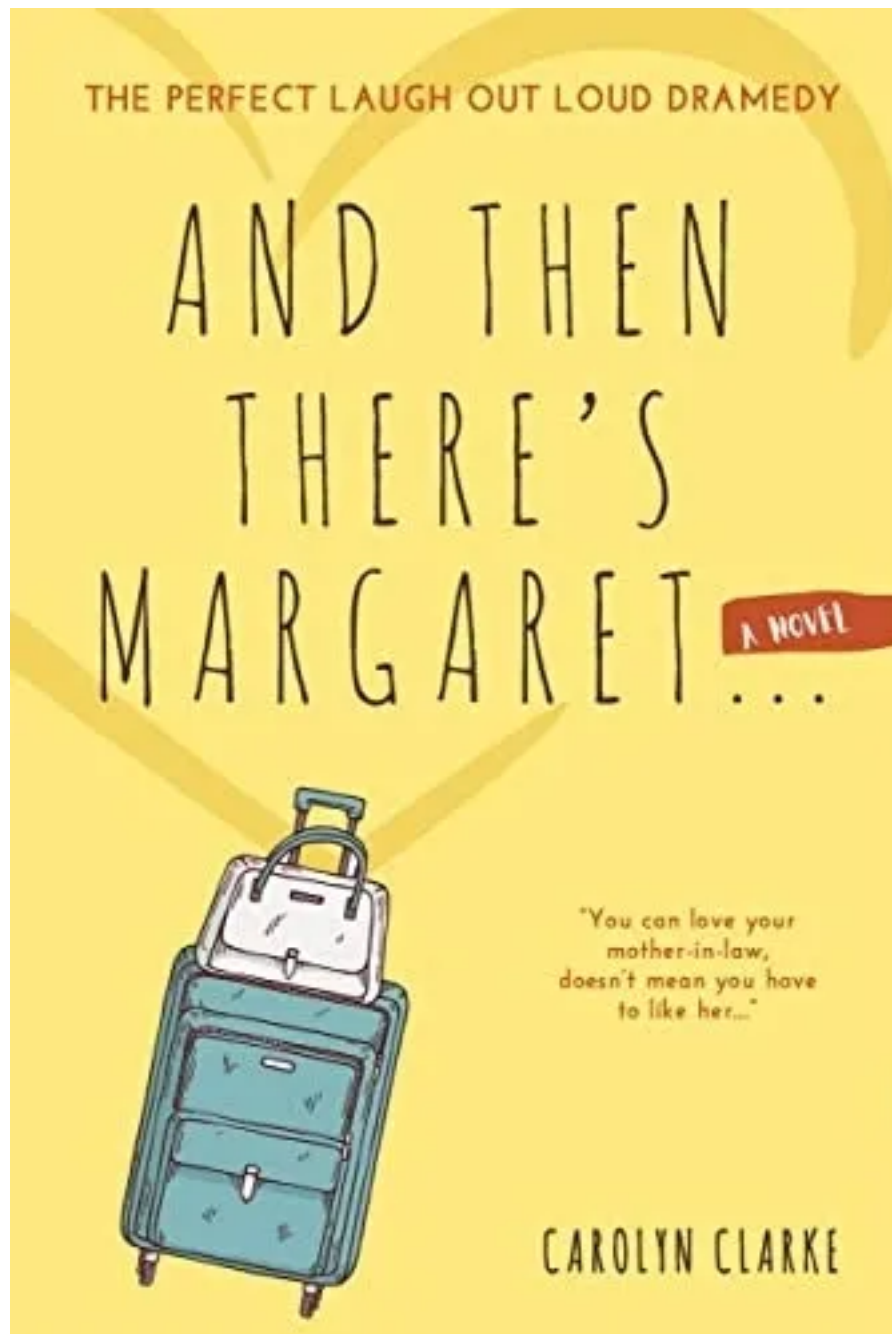


Yesterday was a day of getting things done. I completed a first draft of a monster legal motion I was working on and now must go through the intricacies of tying in the supporting papers and editing and finalizing its form. But the heaviest lifting is done - its factual and legal arguments are all there. But before I could wrap that up, I had Jeter (pronounced in Bronxian "Jeetaa"), named after that S.S. god of the NY Yankee baseball diamond Derek J, in for his six week shearing, by his hair and makeup specialist, Annie in Loveland. Annie is great with Jeter, and knows how to deal with his old dog, NY grumpiness. During the spring and summer months Jeter gets literally sheared. No cutesy puffs of fur on his tail or legs or muzzle. It is purely utilitarian, as he remains cooler and it is easier to spot critters that may hitchhike on him during his forays into the higher grass areas during the warmer months.



Well done Annie.

Yesterday was additionally quite special in that I, by sheer chance, was introduced on Twitter to the Canadian Author, Carolyn R. Clarke. CRC's debut novel, "And Then There's Margaret," is also one of the five finalist for the Maxy Award in the Literary & Humor division. She is quite gracious, as we exchanged long distance wishes for good luck and committed to following each other in the Twitterverse. It also turns out that she is a recent member of the BRW literary stable. You can never have too much humor these days, or successful BRW authors, so well done CRC, right out of the gate. I urge my readers to give her book a read when it drops in July.



As anyone who reads my blogs will know, I am a huge fan of Canadian comedy, and one of my favorite CBC series is Letterkenny - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4647692>

And given that this is a mother-in-law related work, I'm in. Just pre-ordered it.

Speaking of new BRW authors, it turns out that one of my dear friends from back in the GF&M days, Marissa Banez, has signed with BRW to debut her first children's novel early next year. I am a huge fan of children's books, as they set the hooks for a love of

reading that will carry a child right through life. So, well done Marissa B!

In fact, I was just reading a children's book to my grand daughters Stella and Savannah yesterday evening (Scarlett was out back playing with some friends). Now there is an art to reading children's books, you have to over-dramatize, assume different voices for each character and take those pregnant pauses while you are turning the pages to establish eye contact with your listeners so you know they are still following along. It also builds their anticipation for what is coming on the next page. It was one of those specialty books that inserts the name of the child - in this case Stella - as the main character. It must have been a solid performance because when it was over the older and more articulate granddaughter, Savanna, declared that from that point on, she was to be called Stella and Stella, who has only mastered rudimentary but age appropriate speech patterns, Savanna. McCaffrey sibling rivalry at its best.

Speaking of articulate grandchildren, yesterday my glorious grandson, Lucian Mattiace, who turns ten in August, sent me a video from his iPhone that captured his first lesson on in-door sky-diving. It was amazing. Modern technology is a wonderful thing. Well done Lucian.

Speaking of reading, my dear long time friend and conspirator, BC, finally read KMAG. I would love to post his long responsive text but given the expletives and spoilers, I dare not. I can only assume that he has a packed an RV and taken again to the road in the middle of the night.

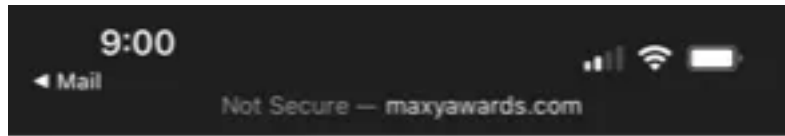
I will also add that the OFC in general was in brilliant form yesterday on the group text. BC, Joe, Lenny and Eileen all chipped in to the hilarity. Limericks flew. Everyone took their licks (wink-wink). I was in tears (of laughter).

Well, speaking of getting on the road, I must go cuddle a kitty and then make my rounds.

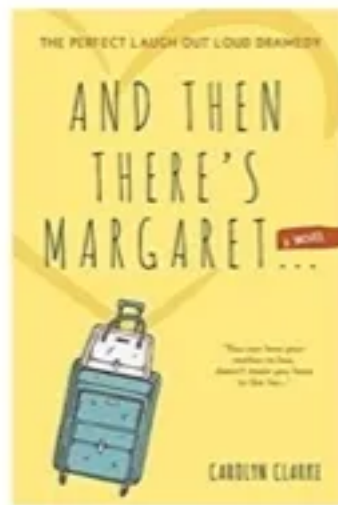
But it's hump day, so you fine, five readers go out there and get over it. But when you reach its peak, stop for a moment and gaze forward in time towards Friday. It beckons like a Celtic Merrow. And most of all, make it a great day.

Will Wonders Never Cease

April 19, 2022



LITERARY & HUMOR FINALISTS



And Then There's Margaret



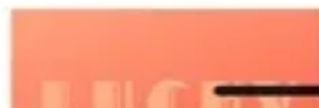
Just River



The Wise Ass



The Candy Capers



So yesterday, as I was going through my personal emails in the early morning, I came across one with the header The Maxy Awards.

It was the last night of the Pink Moon, which was absolutley stunning, as framed on my front property by my whirligigs:



The Pink Moon's magical energy was working overtime. The Maxy Awards are a big event for independent publishers and self-publishing authors. It has the same maverick cache as indie film awards. However, to be honest, I did not recall submitting any book from *The Claire Trilogy* for this award, because I was too busy trying to get all three books finished and out over the past two

years. So I deleted the email and moved on, thinking only about this legal brief I had been working on and needed to finish up. I was also distracted by a flurry of dirty, and yet quite creative, limericks that appeared on the OFC group text - Joe, BC and Lenny. Eileen's ears must have been burning.

Later that morning, I received a text from my dear friend and brilliant author, Christy Cooper Burnett, "You're a finalist in the Maxy Awards, HUGE DEAL!"

Now Christy is this amazing Cali based writer - her *No Way Home/ Escaping Home/Finding Home Trilogy* is award winning and an incredible read - and she is so on top of everything in the publishing industry. Her writing, productivity and energy puts me to shame. She has another book coming out this year and having read it I can tell you without reservation how I am seething with professional jealousy. Its story and execution are brilliant. If you haven't read her work, don't put it off.

We are like fraternal twins, the ying and the yang, with identical senses of humor, and often joke how our main protagonists could easily thrive in each other's narratives. Indeed, if I can pull it off, her latest protagonist will make a guest appearance in my next novel.

I'm hoping for a bar scene with young Jimmy McCarthy. We'll see. Anyway, CCB texts me with this news, and when I mentioned I did not recall submitting TWA, she reminds me (familiarily chastises - she's like the smarter twin) that we both submitted on the same day.

I must learn to pay more attention to these things. When it comes to all things writing related, I would be lost without CCB.

So I go to the web site and low and behold, there's Claire's face staring back at me as one of the five Finalists for the Literary & Humor category.

To suggest that it was thrilling is a gross understatement. I am honored to have my elves' work appear there. Thank you Maxy Award judges.

Well, I wish the other four finalists in my group, and all finalists in the other groups, the very best of luck, and may the best mule win! So I'm guessing that there may be contract renegotiations in the offing between me, on the one hand, and Claire & Honey, on the other, as both mules spent an inordinant amount of time standing before my office window yesterday afternoon.



They haven't started carrying placards just yet, and haven't made any extortionistic demands, but their studied aloofness gives me pause. Its clear that Claire has heard about being a finalist in The Maxy Awards and will soon be seeking a larger delivery of carrots in the near future. I'm beginning to think she has been psychically communicating with Eileen Cotto, who comes from a family of rabid trade unionists and is quick to infiltrate and organize the oppressed. "There once was an instigator named Eileen, who refused to be a cog in the machine . . . "

I will keep you posted.

Well, this morning I have to take Jeter-Wocky in for his six week shearing:



I have a ton of other little chores to take care of as well, including a Kitty-cuddle and my rounds, before I drop Jeter off with Annie (Jeter's personal groomer in Loveland). So I better get hopping. Then it is back to the legal mines. "Will no one [in Hollywood] rid me of this turbulent priest?"

So, the rest of your fine, five readers, go out there and take-on Tuesday.

But make it a great one!

PS: Congratulations to my dear friend, Marissa Banez. We used to toil together as legal associates at GF&M. Marissa will be publishing her first children's book in January 2023. Well done Marissa. Get those kids hooked on reading at the earliest opportunity.

Ass Over Tea Kettle - Easter Egg Hunt - KW's Books

April 18, 2022



There is nothing worse than a tipped Gnome. It is so unseemly. And yet, with all of the wind lately it was bound to happen. And this guy, George, is the last of my NY Gnomes. He is the runt of the litter and made of the lighter, composite resin. I have another Gnome, Geoffrey, that made the trip out west with me in 2017, but he originated from Primrose Hill in London, where my sister pinched him from a neighbor's front yard on the day she moved back to America. The felonious blood runs deep in the McCaffrey's veins.

Geoffrey has the most wonderful upper crust British accent. He says he was quite happy to be liberated, believes in radical emancipation and was around to support the American Revolution.

Other than George, the other Gnomes, including Geoffrey, are made of concrete. Untippable.

While I did have to do my outdoor chores in the early morning yesterday, moving mule muffins, stuffing hay bags and refilling water troughs, the majority of the day was spent visiting with my family down the road while my granddaughters contributed to the support of local dentistry through their annual Easter egg hunt, and then Lisa and I stopped by MOS to grab an early dinner and check on the bookshelf, and exchange warm *bon mots* with Lonnie and the crew, and where I received a few extra quarters of dill pickles, which I love (they cleanse the pallet):



PSA - If any of you published writers have a book that you would like to add to this collection, just include a cool inscription on its inside cover to Lonnie Bell and mail it off to the hinterlands c/o Mike O'Shays, [512 Main St, Longmont, CO 80501](mailto:mike@mos.com). You would not just be contributing to a library, you would be contributing to a NOCO literary movement.

Anyway, speaking of growing collections, one of my five readers, Kirsten Williams of Florida, finally received her inscribed collection of *The Claire Trilogy* via pony express, and sent in some photos of her with the set. I selected the below photo because of the wry smile:



Great ink, Kirsten. Enjoy the books, and write that novel. Both Kirsten and her mother, Mary Ellen, who confirmed the Irish in their genetic woodpile, have read the trilogy and have written me through this website. They are both very witty, and get my work. I appreciate the multi-generational, familial support.

The OFC was unusually quiet yesterday, which I assume is the result, in part, of their fair weather Catholicism, led by the example of St. Eileen Magdaline, the younger and more incorrible sister of

Mary M, collectively nurturing that tiny thread of hope that they won't all be joining me in Dante's Inferno. Given our common past, I won't be giving away their seats on the ring next to me anytime soon, although I get a separate ticket to ride, just by being a lawyer.

Well Monday awaits, and I have my Kitty to cuddle:



and so I will say *a demain*.

Don't let Monday dictate your present state of mind, it too shall pass.

Until we meet again, go out and have a great day!

Happy Easter - The Ginger's First Walkabout

April 17, 2022



When I was a kid, I used to really enjoy Easter. Next to Christmas and Birthdays, it was the one day you woke up and there was a present - an easter basket full of jelly beans, marshmallow peeps, and a giant chocolate bunny. There was always a stuffed toy rabbit with fake, and often colorful, fur in the basket, which each child then protected with his life. (I always felt that Easter basket grass was a static annoyance comparable to Christmas tinsel, it clung to you, got everywhere and some always ended up in you mouth). Plus, during the lead up to Easter, our parents always took the children out to update our Sunday finery, with new suits and shoes, that were all presented to the neighborhood at Easter Sunday high mass. And the mothers in the neighborhood all trotted out their new Easter bonnets, back when women wore hats to church (young girls

wore white paper or cloth doilies bobby-pinned to their hair). Now I'm talking the early 60s, at the time of the Tridentine Mass, when the High Mass (*Missa Cantata* or Sung Mass) was celebrated with all its pomp and circumstance. It was the place the Irish Catholics wanted to be seen. There were always more than one priest on the altar, and a ton of altar boys (no girls back then - later my older brother and I were both tossed off that cult on the same day, minutes apart, by Monsignor Richardson: "Are you a champ or a chump?" were the last words the prick ever said to me. I would not have minded the dismissal if I hadn't sacrificed so many Saturday mornings, when we should have been watching cartoons, instead being drilled in Latin by my religiously imperious father - "*Confiteor Deo omnipotenti . . .*" Yes, this was pre-Vatican 2).

Anyway, when my family first moved up to Riverdale from the Grand Concourse by Yankee Stadium, we spent the first year living in the basement apartment of the family home while the lease to the family living on the top floor - I'm pretty sure their name was Silansky - ran its course. Posie and Spaghetti (and my Uncle Bernie, my Dad's younger brother, the Ginger's namesake) lived on the first floor until Uncle Bernie got his own apartment somewhere in Queens.

Well during the wee morning hours on our first Easter in Riverdale, a time before the children were even enrolled in St. Margaret's Catholic School, my still wee little brother, The Ginger, wearing his footie pajamas, grabbed his new faux fur bunny, put on my mother's Easter bonnet, and toddled out the side door and into the unknown world, while the rest of the family dosed peacefully in their crowded bedrooms.

Now, that was the first time The Ginger made an Irish exit - when a person leaves a place without saying goodbye to the people they are with - a trick which later morphed into a coyote escape, when a now sober person with buyer's remorse will literally chew off their limb trapped under a pillow to escape a drunk one night stand without waking them. (I am not being a sexist here, many a young man has woken to find the severed arm left by a much prettier woman who sacrificed that appendage rather than face the snoring, farting bastard she woke up next to. Luckily, like a bearded dragon's tail, those limbs always grew back before their next foray

into bar dating). The Ginger ultimately mastered them all. It was pure genius.

Indeed, during his teenage years, The Ginger's siblings called him "The Wind." He would always step away from a family meal and excuse himself to go to the bathroom which was in the hallway just outside and opposite the dining room. There was a closet in the same hallway that when its door was open would obscure the hallway from my father's vantage point at the head of the table. The Ginger always made a fuss about getting some toiletry from that closet before he went into the bathroom, and always left the closet door open. By the time the sound of the toilet flush had gone silent, The Ginger had vanished like The Wind.

Anyway, back to 1960.

Like with most Holidays, on Easter, the children woke up first so we could grab our respective baskets based on the name tags on the wicker handles. My eldest sibling, Veronica (Bonnie in TWA) would arbitrate all challenges with a sound thumping if there were any battles among her brothers over the size or amount of the contents of the baskets, because she was the only one of who could read at this time and she was still bigger and stronger than us. Anyway, while we all sat around the living room chomping on jellybeans and chocolate and working on the bellyaches we would later suffer, my exhausted parents slept walked past us into the kitchen, my mother carrying my infant brother John, and then returned with their hot coffees to watch the chaos from the comfort of the couch, still half asleep.

It was a good half hour before my slowly waking mother said "Where's Bernie?"

My father looked over at The Ginger's basket, noticed the newest velveteen rabbit missing and responded "He must have gone back to bed. I'll check on him."

My father then disappeared in the direction of the bedrooms.

The next moment we heard my father's patently-panicked, booming voice reverberating throughout the structure of the building.

"Vvveeeerrrraaa, Bernie's not here!"

My mother handed John to my sister and flew in the direction of the bedrooms where she began to shriek like Banshee.

Moments later the back door flew open and my grandfather, Spaghetti, rushed in, dressed in a pair of sail cloth long johns (with the two-button poop chute on the ass) his untied workboots, his fedora and carrying his faithful hurley, a bladed wooden bat that could smack a small leather ball hundreds of feet and crack the skull of any man. Posie appeared behind him in her nightgown and the fine netting she wore to keep her silver-blue hairdo in check. "Jeazus Christ!," Spaghetti bellowed, "Vera, you've waken the dead!"

I wasn't sure in that moment whether Spaghetti was "the dead" or whether there were now a cluster of spirits floating around their apartment above us. Turns out, it was both.

Posie pushed past her husband and raced into the bedrooms where my parents had by now overturned every bed and cleared every closet looking for The Ginger.

"He's not here!" my mother shrieked.

"Calm down Vera, you'll give yourself a heart attack." Counseled Posie. "We'll find him."

"Are you all idjits!" Spaghetti shouted. "The side door is open!"

With that, all four of the adults rushed out the side door and we could hear their voices, calling my brother's name, grow fainter as their searches expanded from the yard onto the surrounding block. Seeing how Veronica, now pacing the livingroom rocking infant John while mimicking the "moosh, moosh, moosh" sound handed down through generations as an Irish incantation to help calm a crying bozzy, my older brother and I decided that if The Ginger didn't want his Easter candy, it was up for grabs. Of course that led to one our earliest donnybrooks, as we both reached for his chocolate bunny at the same moment. Fists followed. I lost.

My older brother and I may have been still locked in that fight to the death, if it weren't for the sound of a police siren rolling up our driveway. Veronica (with infant), Eddie and I raced out the side door and just got to the top of the cement stairway as the police cruiser, one of those iconic black and whites with the one flashing red cherry light on top, came to a stop at the top by the garage.

Like a pack of dogs, the elder McCaffreys came racing up the driveway in the cherry-tops wake, my mother with a look of horror on her face.

Two very tall policemen then exited the front seats of the cruiser - I swear they looked like Toody and Muldoon from Car 54 - and the Toody cop then opened the backdoor of the vehicle, crooked his finger and The Ginger, Easter Bonnet on and velveteen bunny in tow, slid out of the backseat and rushed to my mothers arms.

The Muldoon copper warily eyed Spaghetti, still in his long-johns and boots and waving his hurley menacingly.

"Is this boy yours?" Muldoon asked, with just a little trepidation in his voice.

"Yes officer, he's ours," my father said as he stepped forward and gave the officer a hearty handshake. Muldoon winced. Given the McCaffrey code for handing out handshakes, I was surprised my father wasn't arrested for assault right then and there.

"Where did you find him?" Posie asked.

"We didn't." Toody responded. "A cabdriver spotted him walking along Mosholu and picked him up and brought him to the 50th."

"We put him in the cruiser and figured we would drive around to see if anyone was looking for him." Muldoon added, still shaking blood back into his hand.

"The little bugger pointed to this house." Toody said.

By now the neighbors all started to appear at the foot of the driveway. That might have been the first of many times that the McCaffrey household became the source of neighborhood entertainment.

Those were simpler but more practical times back then, when police were allowed to solve local problems as human beings and not as cogs in a bureaucracy. Today, The Ginger would have ended up in a stint with Child Services while my parents were put through their paces to get him back.

Anyway, their job done, the coppers left, the neighbors disbanded and the McCaffreys got their shit together and attended High Mass in all our Easter finery.

That wasn't the last time The Ginger gave us a collective heart attack, but it was a classic.

So you fine, five readers go out and enjoy this Easter any way you want. Say some prayers, eat some candy, visit your family.

But whatever you do, make it a great one.

Me, I'm going to upstairs and cuddle a Kittie, then my rounds, blessing all the little live bunnies I'll see along the way.

Wildfires & Count Your Blessings

April 16, 2022



My last compelled walk about excursions with my magic mules made me appreciate just how much trouble it is to deal with them outside the mystical confines of Casa Claire.

I cannot imagine anything that would cause me to intentionally do that again. Then yesterday evening, while I was driving home from MOS, where I stopped to see Lonnie, Kyle and to meet Kyle's daughter, Shelby, for the first time, my DIL Georgie called me to ask if I heard anything about a wildfire burning close to our area. I just happened to glance up in my car and spotted the fire she was

talking about. This photo was snapped about 5 minutes away from my house.

When I got home I went directly to my deck to see if I could get a better view for purposes of assessing how close it was to my home.



That is the western boundary fence line to my property.

My first thought was that I was glad Lisa had not yet returned from her trip for her sister Michele's memorial. She certainly had missed some adventures this past week.

My next thought was, I hope she has a home to return to tomorrow. I started to do a mental evacuation check list. I knew I would toss Jeter and Blue in a car, and I texted Luke, who just lives down the road, and asked him if he had a cat carrier so I could snatch up Smokey as well. He had something that would meet the needs, so those items were taken care of. His wife, Georgie, could pack the

girls and their dog Cairo in their SUV and Luke could come by and snatch my smaller animals with his truck, and they could wait it out in the Super Walmart parking lot in Longmont. But before he left I would also give Luke my extra case of ammo I have at home, not because I was worried he would need it, he has his own weapons and quite honestly is a walking weapon himself, but because I didn't want those rounds going off in a fire.

Then I thought about the mules.

I knew Claire would be no problem. Luckily we were in for the first night of a full moon, so it would make it easier to see them on the back property. Once the mules were haltered, I would just lead them on foot out to CR 23 and head North then East toward the town of Berthoud, since the fire was coming from the Southwest. A double horse trailer is on my must acquire list. Maybe if a movie deal comes my way.

I would grab my computer external hard drive and laptop, and throw Lisa's jewelry into a carryall with some extra clothing for us both, along with my handgun and phone charger and then just leave everything else behind, praying that it all would be there afterwards. It's a sobering thought.

It made me further appreciate just how hard it must be for the Ukrainians who have had to abandon their homes and flee the horrors of war over these past months. I said a short prayer for them. There, but for the grace of God, go us all.

Then I spoke with my dear friend Pam Ervin, caretaker of Tique, the beautiful arabian, and godmother to Claire (both Pam and Tique are mentioned as characters in TWA). Pam, who lives right at the foot of the foothills, assured me, based upon her many years in Colorado, that she was not worried just yet, but that she would keep me posted and sound the alarm should I need to evacuate.

Although she too had performed her mental check list.

Of course I was texting with the OFC, who were doing their damnest to cause Eileen to sin on Good Friday, if only to assure that we would all end up in hell together. I believe Joe had gotten Maureen (ne Collins) to eat steak at the dinner party they were both attending, so her hotseat is safe. Filthy limericks were flying, Joe the maestro was at his best, and that was a laugh worth having. But they all voiced their authentic concern, BC going as far as to

perform map locations, which was disconcerting. I mentioned having to locate the marshmallows and signed off.

Then I tried to distract myself with watching TV, but my mind wasn't focused, and I stayed up way past my bedtime - at last glance 10 pm. I took a final look to the west from my back deck to see if I saw fire rising from behind the foothills. Thank God I didn't. Then I crashed on the living room couch in case I had to make a quick exit.

When I awoke this morning at around 2:30 am, I went outside to check the sky and was blessed by the sight of the first night of the clear Pink moon, named for the spring flowers that are blossoming at this time and not for its color. There was no haze. There were no missed calls or texts from Luke or Pam on my phone, and that is a good thing.

I was happy to see Claire and Honey waiting patiently by the barn for their breakfast.

I thank the universe for sparing us this time, and I thank the brave and tireless first-responders that put their lives on the line to keep all safe.

So, my fine, five readers, count your blessings, and go out and enjoy your Saturday.

I actually look forward to tidying up the house and doing my chores this morning, because the house and property still stand.

I will make sure to give Smokey an extra cuddle when I go upstairs.

The rest of you go out there and make today a great one.

But before I go, a shout out to the lovely Shelby, daughter of Kyle, it was an absolute pleasure meeting you and chatting with you and your dad yesterday.

SK Murphy Joins The Shelf - Another Wind Fueled Roundup

April 15, 2022



Opened up the computer this morning to an email from Lonnie Bell with a simple message: "This thing is catching on. . . Tell K thank you from the Clan"

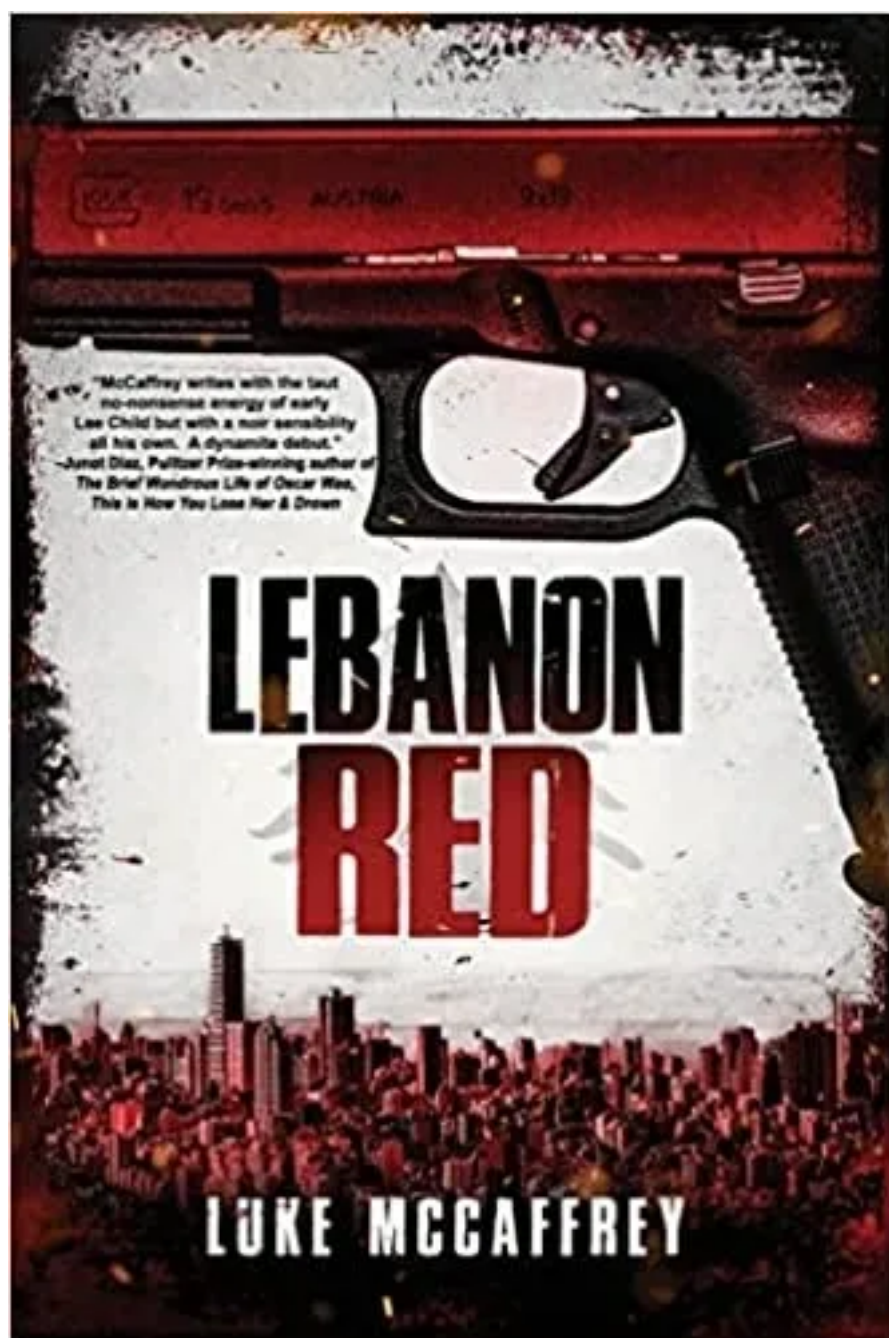
[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=We%27re+gonna+need+a+bigger+boat&view=detail&mid=7B2036C6360EE1902E297B2036C6360EE1902E29&FORM=VIRE)

[q=We%27re+gonna+need+a+bigger+boat&view=detail&mid=7B2036C6360EE1902E297B2036C6360EE1902E29&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=We%27re+gonna+need+a+bigger+boat&view=detail&mid=7B2036C6360EE1902E297B2036C6360EE1902E29&FORM=VIRE)

K, I cannot thank you enough. You are the first female writer to be added to the illustrious shelf. I am quite certain Professor Kyle (and other book loving MOS patrons) will be thrilled to engage in both the darkness and light that are found among the collective pages. Well done, and thanks for joining the crew.

To those other writers who are still on the fence, pull the trigger and be a part of NOCO literary history.

Speaking of writers whom I will compel to contribute, I'm proud to announce that Luke McCaffrey's debut novel, Lebanon Red, is up for presale on the major distribution chains:



"McCaffrey writes with the taut no-nonsense energy of early Lee Child but with a noir sensibility all his own. A dynamite debut."
—Junot Diaz, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, *This Is How You Lose Her* & *Drown*

LEBANON RED

LUKE MCCAFFREY

"*Lebanon Red* moves so seamlessly from the backstreets of the Bronx to the shady underworld of Beirut you're liable to find yourself wishing you'd packed a side-arm for the read."

—Colin Broderick, writer/director of *A Bend in The River*

LEBANON RED

BEIRUT, LEBANON, 2020: HOME TO INTERNATIONAL GANGSTERS, FOREIGN SPIES AND SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

O'Hara Poit, released early from prison under the pretext of a Covid-19 outbreak, now owes the men who orchestrated it – a radical organization with connections to fringe elements deep within the U.S. political establishment. O'Hara is given an alias and sent to Beirut, where he is tasked with tracking down his estranged childhood friend, Red, now a member of a violent anarchist militia being trained by the Volk Group – an elite Russian mercenary force. When Red's militia returns to America, they plan to unleash mayhem and bring down the country. In his quest to stop this from happening, O'Hara must navigate his way among gangsters, spies and even Saudi princes. He meets a beautiful woman, makes dangerous enemies, and learns that nothing in his life is as it seems, and nobody is safe – least of all himself. The mission to find Red becomes a mission to survive.

Luke McCaffrey is a native of the Bronx, New York, who has also lived in North Carolina and Egypt. He currently resides in Colorado with his wife, three daughters and their dog Cairo. He wrote this novel while serving as a firefighter with the Denver Fire Department.

BLACK & ROSE
writing

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I implore you all to check out Luke's novel. He's a much better writer than I am and has lived a far more interesting life. Mark 1:11



That's himself with Claire yesterday, sharing a laugh after an hour of Luke and our wonderful neighbors assisting in another roundup when another shearing wind blew open another gate through which Honey, startled by the racket, bolted through, followed by Claire.

I have to say that it could have been far worse, for at the exact moment this occurred, I had come up from my basement lair to check on an Amazon package that had just been delivered (I was afraid it would be blown away) and caught the tail end of the escapees heading out my driveway, Michelle, my extra-terrestrial neighbor, was out in front of her house, collecting her windblown garbage cans when she spotted the duo. She instantaneously contacted Everett, who was playing music in his outerspace mancave (he is quite the musician), and the two appeared on the road ready to give chase. And what a chase it was.

There was I, cursing the mules and the pandemic pounds I was carrying, as I ran at my best clip trying to catch them as they headed east towards the dangerous County Road 23. This path took us past Luke's house, where he was babysitting Stella (yep, her) while Georgie his wife was out collecting Scarlett and Savanna (yep, them) from school. It also took us past the home of another wonderful young couple - Caitlin and Justin - both meteorologists - who just happened to be looking out their front window. They immediately joined the posse.

Well the mules made a left onto CR 23 and headed North at a gallup. All I could do was run out onto the middle of the roadway waving my arms frantically in the hope that approaching cars from both directions would spot me and slow down or I would just drop dead and the whole thing would be over for me.

Through an act of God, Honey made a sharp left and headed down the path that leads to the community refuse plant, which caused Claire to follow and at least got everyone off the busy and dangerous roadway. But the game of Ringalivio was just getting started. Honey and Claire then went house to house through the common areas to stop and visit with every horse along the way, standing around just long enough in each spot to catch up with their cousins and just when you thought you were close enough to harness them, Claire shouted "Gotta go!" and the two ornery mules took flight towards the next property. There were many comical moments like when Claire gave Everett a head fake (in basketball it is called breaking your ankles) and bolted past him, or when Honey limboed beneath a rope I had hung between an opening to avoid Everett again. In all fairness, in the instance with Claire, Ev was

distracted when Doug, another young neighbor who came out to help, tossed him a halter. With Honey, who taught her the limbo? Never take your eye off the mule.

The chase took us across many a property, as Claire and Honey seemed to know every fence gap in the area. I suspected that they were receiving psychic cues from the other equines who were cheering them on.

By now, Luke had joined the chase, coming down the roadway to cut off the mules' escape route.

I knew that if I could capture Claire, Honey would follow us back to the house. When Honey led Claire onto another neighbors' front property, the very brave woman who was working out front (also a horse owner) waved Claire into a smaller enclosure, where I was finally able to calm and halter her.

As I led the captured Claire (with her mischevious snickering cohort following a few steps behind us) back through the gulley (yep that gulley) Caitlin opened the gates of her property to allow us a short cut back to Beverly to avoid having to return to CR 23. All of the horses who had witnessed the event appeared along their fence lines bowing and winnowing their support for the mythic Claire and giving her thanks for the extended human comedy skit we provided them.

I am forever thankful for the community assist, because while I am hopeful that I would have eventually captured Claire, if only when she returned to check on me when I dropped from a heart attack, I'm not sure where Honey would have led us before that happened.

I am blessed by my neighbors. I never once had to ask for their help. They saw my need and volunteered. They are the best!

Thank you one and all.

Well, anyway, Luke then came by with his truck full of metal fencing and, driving in steel fence posts with his sledge hammer, patched the ten foot gap that led to the first escape a couple of nights ago.

It will hold nicely until the fence contractor arrives on June 1st to replace the entire stretch. I tied off all of the gates so that nothing short of a level 5 tornado could pop them open. I will assess each one of them this weekend to reinforce all of their locking mechanisms.

The entire time I could hear Honey and Claire having a laugh while they gorged themselves on delicious hay in the barn. Escaping does conjure an appetite. Even McCaffrey mules love to relive their humorous adventures, and I give them plenty of fodder. Claire still loves to tell the tale of when I fell through the old back deck.

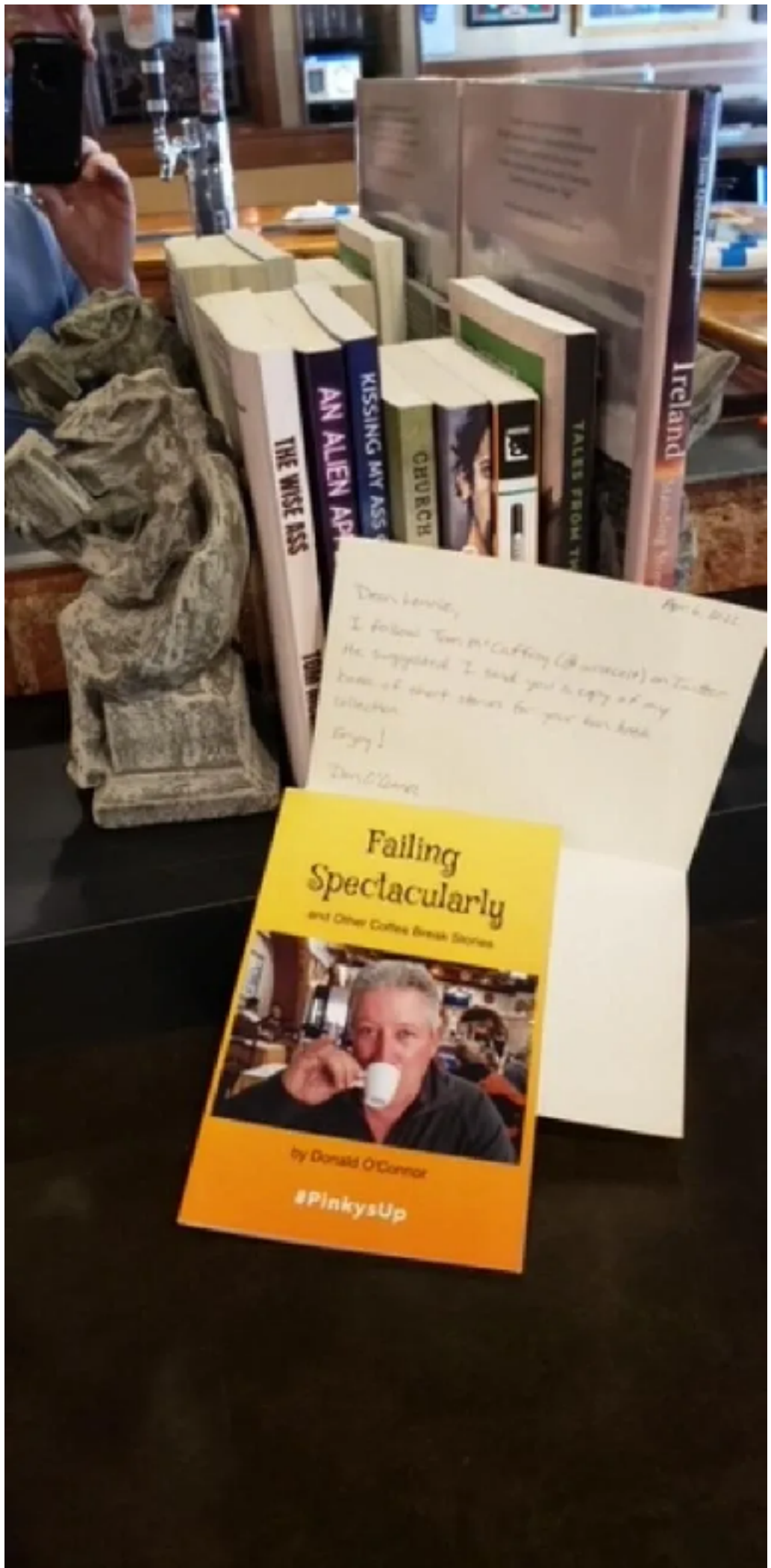
Anyway, its Friday! Need I say more.

All of my fine, five readers go out and enjoy this day and all of its potential.

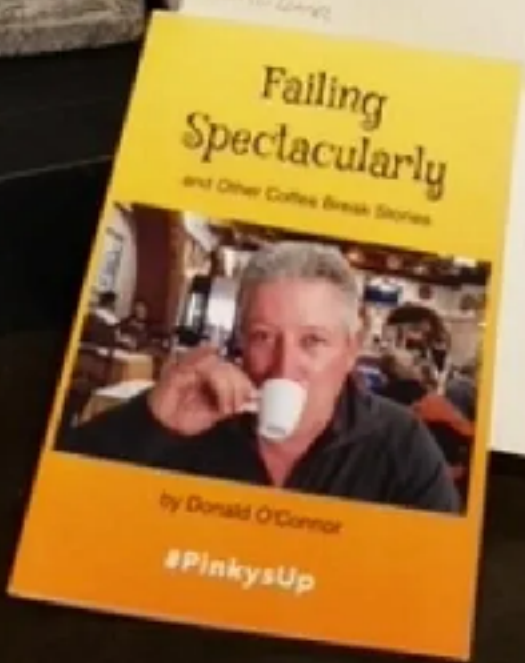
But most of all, make it a great one.

One Book At A Time MOS Bookshelf & Literary Collection

April 14, 2022



Dear David,
I follow Tom O'Carroll (@carroll) on Twitter
He suggested I send you a copy of my
book of short stories for your bar book
Enjoy!
David O'Connor



It all started with Lonnie Bell (a fine Scottish name), the Manager extraordinaire of Mike O'Shays in Longmont, Colorado. That's himself, below:



Lonnie is a naturally charming and gregarious bugger who makes it his business to ensure that every patron in MOS feels like part of the MOS family. He makes sure he remembers everyone's names and everytime you walk in you feel like that Christmas coffee commercial where the adult child makes it home just in time for that steaming cup of Christmas coffee and a familial embrace.

So, sometime last fall, Lonnie strikes up a conversation with one of his Celtic patrons, Tom Quinn Kumpf, who is also a photo journalist, and who then provides Lonnie with inscribed copies of his books.



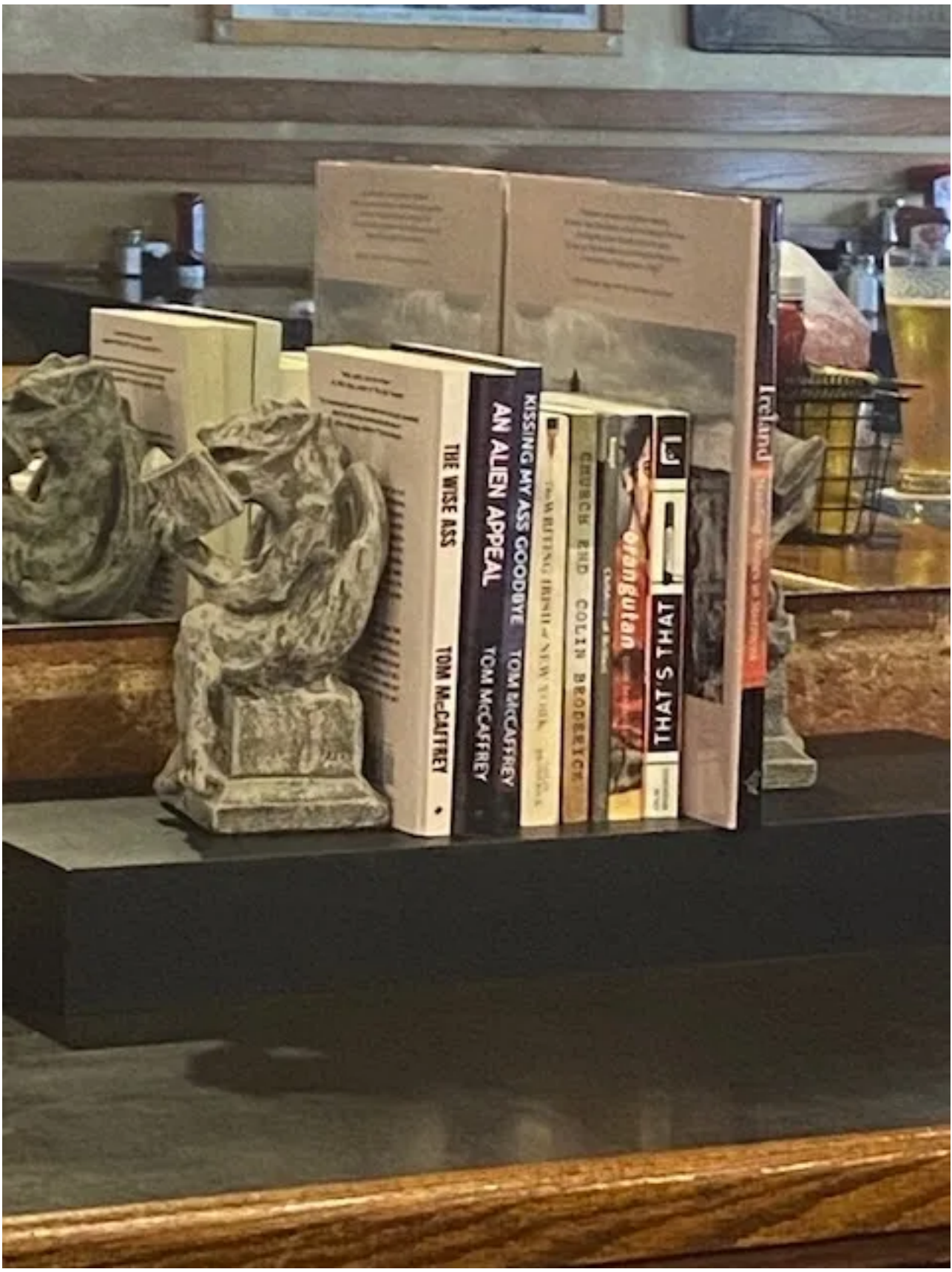
And his other book, Ireland, Standing Stones to Stormont:



At around the same time, after a mythic contretemps with my wife Lisa over an askew coat of arms, Lonnie and I engage in a discussion about writing - Lonnie has a strong background in writing, theatre and film production - which led me to provide him with an inscribed copy of TWA. Lonnie then decided that he was going to create this bookshelf, where he would display these books for his patrons to see and read if they so want to. One of those patrons, Kyle Dooley, became the first to embrace the reading challenge:



Well I mentioned this project to the brilliant Celtic writer/auteur Colin Broderick, who then delivered an inscribed set of his own works to Lonnie, just as my latter two books (AAA and KMAG) also joined the group. <https://www.colinbroderick.com/books>
At this point, Lonnie had finished the physical MOS Literary Bookshelf (with its cool Gargoyle Bookends), where it took its place of honor bracing its initial set of writers behind the beautiful and ornate bar in MOS where your first walk through the door.



THE WISE ASS

TOM MCCAFFREY

AN ALIEN APPEAL

TOM MCCAFFREY

KISSING MY ASS GOODBYE

TOM MCCAFFREY

GRUICH END COLIN BRODERICK

ofangutan

THAT'S THAT

Ireland

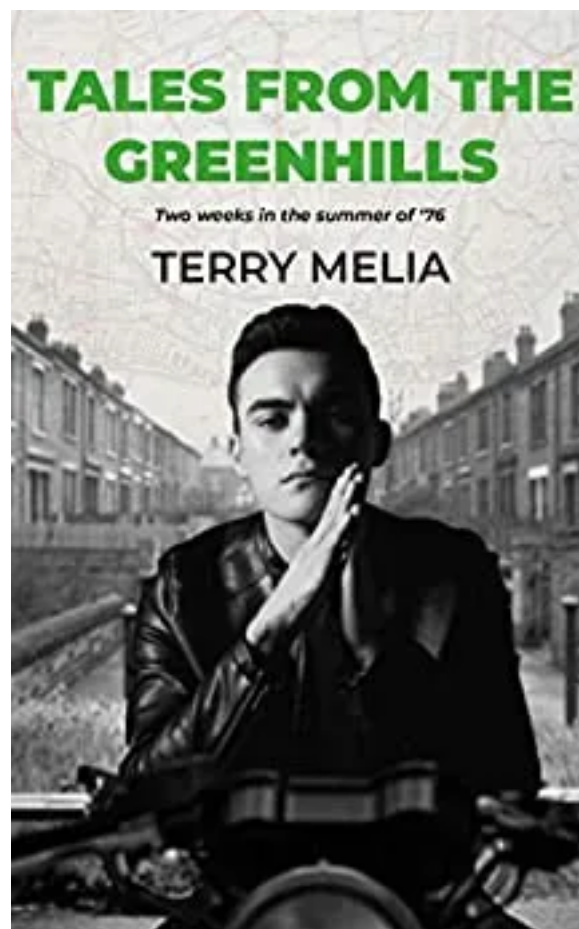
Kyle was thrilled, and immediately burned through the MOS collection, displaying uncanny insights as to each of the works.

This man should have been an Oxford Don.

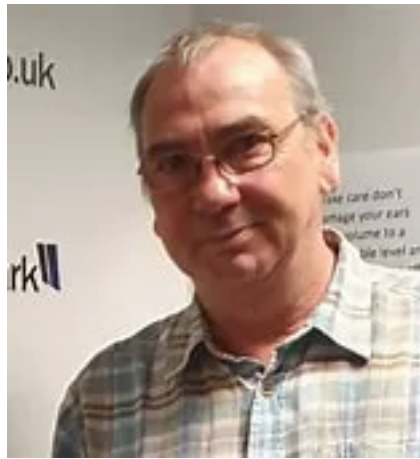
But a collection isn't a collection unless there is collecting, and no Irishman likes to hear the sentence "I thought it would be bigger!"

So, during my recent forays into the Writers Group on Twitter, I put the word out that if any of the writers would like to contribute to this illustrious pantheon, they need only send a paperback copy of their work inscribed to Lonnie Bell c/o MOS: <https://mikeoshays.com>

The first writer who took up my offer was a cheeky Liverpoolian buggler named Terry Meil, who sent his book across pond and country to Lonnie:



You can see the top of the book on the far right of the Shelf in the introductory photo, and that is Terry below:



Terry also produces a video blog where he performs interviews and addresses all things creative:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/GreenhillsChats>

Check him out.

Then Don O'Connor, a Canadian Celt, sent Lonnie his collection of humorous stories, again see top photo (That's the equally cheeky Don - pinky out - on the book's cover).

I have recently heard rumors that a brilliant NYC poet (I have read her work and can completely vouch for it), will be the first female to contribute to this collection. I anxiously await news of its arrival.

Will keep you posted.

There are a couple of other "very important" female writers whom I have read that I intend to cajole into sending their inscribed books, after all, MOS stands for gender equality, or it stands for nothing at all. I will update this list once my cajoling is successful.

Now I want to make absolutely clear that you do not have to be a Celt to join this group, there will be a mass cultural baptism by Guinness of the entire shelf every St. Patty's Day, at which point every writer represented will become an honorary literary hibernian for life. Nor do you need my direct invitation, this is a general open invite. Of course, as the group grows, Lonnie may be compelled to move its location, if for no other reason than to comply with the Longmont fire codes. But Lonnie will cross that bridge when he comes to it.

And Kyle the Curator is anxiously awaiting that next book to read and contemplate. He is wicked insightful.

So, if any of you punters ever have the privilege of having a meal and/or some drinks at MOS, ask the bartender if you can flip through those very special books while you are relaxing with a cool drink, but this is a research library, like Oxford's "The Bodleian" so you must not obscond with the books and please do not spill anything on them. Its an honor code system.

If you like any of the books, you can find them all on Amazon. If you happen to buy mine, Kyle or Lonnie will make the arrangement to have them inscribed. Just come by and leave them at the bar with a note as to what you would like in the inscription. I promise I will write anything you ask (even racy stuff). If I happen to be free and in the area when Kyle/Lonnie calls me, I'll come right by and sign them while you are there and I am completely cool with selfies. As an added treat, if you ever want to know anything about any of my books, and Kyle happens to be sitting there, grab a drink and the nearest stool and ask away, this man knows the backstories to my books better than I do. And it is really a lot of fun to listen to him. If there is something he doesn't know the answer to, he will call or text me and find out. We are like brothers.

Let's do this, let's make MOS the NOCO version of *Shakespeare & Co.* (Paris) meets *Sloppy Joes* (Key West) meets *An Beal Bocht* (Bronx), where world wide travelers stop to have a great meal and drinks and to enjoy some literary stimulation. And maybe hear a few stories.

To misquote *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it [they] will come."

So you fine, five readers (Claire's Theorum) go out there and dance your way through Thursday, as Friday awaits. And if you are in the NOCO area, stop by Mike O'Shays and have yourself some food and beverages. The staff is amazing.

Maybe I'll see you there.

Anyway, its Thursday and the garbage and recycling needs to be collected and dragged to the road.

Then there's a Kitty to cuddle and rounds to make.

But no matter what else happens, you have a great day!

And Then The Wind Came

April 13, 2022



Anyone who lives in Colorado knows about its winds. When it kicks up we can easily hit "breezes" of 50 mph and often "gusts" that are much higher. People around here bungie cord their deck furniture to railings or risk coming out some morning to find it piled into a pyramid on one corner of your deck.

Large plastic garbage containers often take flight, your television and internet reception gets crazy and, when it is really blowing, fences and other fixed objects often come down.

Indeed, I worked the local Colorado wind into a major plot point in TWA.

Last night we had one of those wind storms.

When I last peeked out at C&H, they had hunkered down in the barn and were peeking out its doorway, munching on hay and waiting for a cow to fly by.

When I came out to feed Claire and Honey this morning I didn't see them by the barn, and that is not unusual because sometimes Claire likes to patrol the back fence line and Honey always stays by Claire's side, especially at night.

But it was cold this morning so I put their food dishes in the barn under the heaters and went about my business scooping up some of their business from the barn floor while I waited for Claire to peek around the doorway.

When they didn't appear in their usual 30 seconds, I went out back looking for them. I checked all of their usual hiding spots and then, and this is something I never do in the early morning hours, I

started to call out for them. Nothing. So I started running around the fence line trying to spot them, each passing moment causing my heart rate to race higher and higher.

When I got back to the side paddock I scanned the fence line and that's when I saw that a section of the privacy fence had blown down leaving a large gap between mine and my neighbor's property. I stepped through it and scanned their property, but didn't see any large shadows or movement in the general darkness.

Now anytime an animal escapes in this area the usual protocol is to go on Nextdoor and post something. Coloradans are generous in their time and efforts with their neighbors and that usually causes a local posse to be formed and searches conducted.

But it was way too early and my neighbors were certainly still sleeping.

The first thing I needed to do was to head out towards Country Road 23 because that is the busiest local road and if Claire and Honey had made it that far bad shit could happen.

I threw two halters into my Toyota, threw on the highbeams and slowly drove out towards CR 23, hoping I would spot them along the side of Beverly before I got out that far. Nothing. So I then drove a mile in either direction on 23 and still found nothing. Then I circled back into both Berthoud and Foothills Estates and slowly scanned the roads, hoping I would find them stopped at one of the local equines fenceposts having a Kibbitz about the quality of my morning delivery services. Nothing. So I raced back to the house and drove the Toyota up to the side paddock and focused its highbeams onto my neighbor's lower back property.

And that's when I spotted movement on the edge of the farthest reach of the car lights.

It was Honey, munching on some of my neighbors high grass. A moment later, Claire appeared and quickly hustled the two of them into the shadows.

Leaving the car lights on, I grabbed the halters, hopped my fence and then shot the gap in the damaged fence line.

Now, you never run towards an animal in the dark if you know what's good for you. Especially a mule like Claire. You approach slowly and deliberately and then stop once they focus on you. I knew Honey would never approach me but I expected Claire to

recognize me and approach. Which she did. However, before I could release my west of Ireland sigh of relief, Honey took off.

Knowing that Honey can be a bit impulsive, Claire galloped after her.

It was Keystone Cops time with me racing after the two mules, shouting. I was waiting for the neighbors lights to come on, as another neighbor's Great Pyrenees Guard dogs started to alert all of the other dogs in the area that something was afoot. A crazy human was chasing their local celebrity through the darkness.

But then a miracle happened.

Honey raced along the fence line and shot the gap through the damaged section. Claire bolted after her. I could hear Blue and Jeter welcoming them home as they crossed into our back yard area and then off to the western edge of my property, where they hid, like embarrassed teenagers, among the trees there.

By now my hands were freezing and my fingers numb. But I knew I had to find the largest peices of the broken fence and gerry-rig a temporary barrier in the gap. I'm sure my neighbors were up at that point and cursing my existence.

Anyway, as Willie says, alls well that ends well. My magic mules are home safe and sound and I'm back before my computer with this morning's story to tell.

And here's the irony. This past Monday, I just signed the contract with a fence company to replace that particular stretch of fenceline with something far more wind resistant. The work is scheduled for June 1-3.

You care about your creatures like your children. And you worry about them just as much.

Which leads me to give a shout out to one of my newest blog readers and fan of *The Claire Trilogy*, Kirsten Williams, of Florida. Kirsten is another lover of all creatures big and small - including two wonderful swans in her area - who reached out to me to share how much she enjoyed Claire and the gang. Kirsten, give your wonderful family and your pitty mix Boo, an extra hug for me. Stay in touch.

Well believe or not it is actually 5 am. Where did those morning hours go?

Time to cuddle my Kitty. Then the rounds (again). Then lawyering.

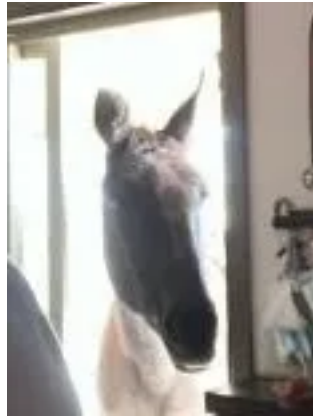
But that doesn't matter because my mules are home safe and sound.

So the rest of you fine, five readers (Claire's Math Theorem) - even with Kirsten as my newest addition, there can only be five - all go out there and get over the hump. On a clear day, you can see Friday. Eyes on the prize!

But most of all, appreciate the little things, and have a great day!

Ethereal Claire - The Return of Nelson DeMille

April 12, 2022



Saturday morning, after my chance meeting with young Jackie the aspiring novelist at King Soopers, and before my trip to the multidimensional barber, I did my weekly food prep for my mules and the other equines along my morning route.

As you know, Claire likes to supervise the process with regular samplings throughout. Claire knows that she has a reputation to maintain in this area, so she serves nothing but the highest quality carrots and apples in her distribution chain. If she sees something that looks a little dicey, she bangs her hoof on the metal door runners to get my attention. I then show her the questionable vegetable. If it is in good shape, she'll eat it just to make sure. If not, she motions toward the sink where it is tossed into the Rabbit Bag, where all of the tops of all the carrots are collecting, to be distributed at the end of the prep process under the Mike Moulton bench (a dear friend who appears in the first Courtroom scene in TWA) which shields the bunnies from sky predators and serves as a protective canopy to the rabbit warren that is under my Workshop out back. Nothing gets wasted at Casa Claire and we have very happy rabbits.

Well in this one particular moment Saturday morning, the sunlight washed in around Claire as she manned her quality control post at

the back door. To me, an Irishman who has seen ghosts that look a lot like this, she appeared downright supernatural. When she saw I was snapping a selfie, she of course hit her Blue Steel cover pose, captured in her iconic cover photo by Kathy Frons Dahl, with Claire's nose a touch to her left and her right cheek exposed. It really is her best side.

Speaking of supernatural, anyone who has followed my blogs knows I am a major fan of the New York based novelist, Nelson DeMille. You will also know that sometime in early March, I put an email message in a bottle and tossed it in the direction of Mr. DeMille's literary agent. You will also know that I almost shit myself when I received a humorous email back from the famous writer at the end of that month, thanking me for my email and wishing me success with my own books.

At that point, I was quite ready to die and go to whatever team had successfully drafted me on the other side of the veil. Given my legal profession, and misspent youth, I was praying that Dante Alighieri was not the commissioner of the Spirit League on draft day.

Anyway, with the recent publication of *KMAG*, I figured that it was only a matter of time before I would be imprinted by BC's milk truck license plate "The Creamer" (there are so many different ways to interpret that, all of them bad, but I meant the most clean and innocent definition) and therefore had nothing to lose. I was a feeling a little cheeky and sent Mr. DeMille a responding email offering to send him an inscribed collection of *The Claire Trilogy* which he could either read for his amusement, or use as doorjams or oversized coffee coasters. Again, I figured the writer would see my email, regret his earlier courtesy, and block me from any further contact.

Lo and behold!

Yesterday, towards the close of business east coast time, I was purging my personal email account of the daily multitude of trash emails that all relate to my algorythmicly, chronologically, and demographically predicted failure of all of my bodily functions, with the words "blue," "prostate," "painful," "memory" and "embarrasment," littered throughout, none of them true, when I spotted the name Nelson DeMille. In all honesty, I am really

considering transitioning to Depends because I again almost shit myself.

Mr. DeMille took me up on my "kind offer" to send him the inscribed copy of *The Claire Trilogy*, explaining that he is between books at the moment and could use "something to read."

Well, to this humble servant, that was akin to God reaching out to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and saying, "I am between miracles, so I'd love to check out your gospels."

And then the magnanimous man closed his email with "Hope your writing is going well."

Trust me, I bent time and space (a trick I picked up from E & M) getting those three books inscribed, packed and through the Berthoud Post Office doors just before closing.

I may never get to the literary promise land, but for that one brief shining moment, I stood there on the precipice taking a real good look at it. And it is magical.

But if I do get there, I promise - right here in writing - to show the same generosity to whatever newby writer reaches out to me, that Mr. DeMille has shown me. It is the simplest of gestures that often mean the most.

Of course, if my next email is just a photo of a cup of steaming hot coffee resting on one of my books, I'll know I'm never quitting my day job.

Speaking of day jobs, mine awaits my attention, but first, a quick kitty cuddle and my morning rounds.

For you fine, five readers, if you have not read Nelson DeMille (which as I write these words seems impossible), put my books aside and open any one of his. I promise you that you will binge them. (But please finish my books when you get the time)

But whatever your plans are for today, make it a great one.

PS: KMAG remains Amazon's #1 New Release in Black Comedy nineteen days after dropping, so I am truly blessed.

5:15



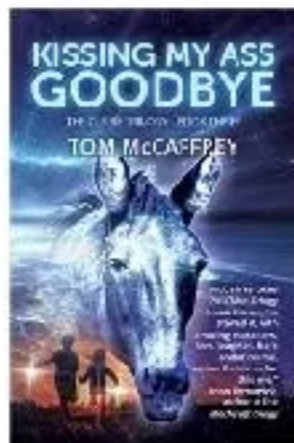
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Tom McCaffrey

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Thank you readers.

Catching Up

April 11, 2022



As you know, this weekend was busy with chores and social events, but there were other little fun moments that fell in between them. For example, for the first time in forever, I had to find a barber to trim my shaggy face fur.



I finally found the perfect barber in Longmont along Main street. And while I was waiting and then sitting for that trim, I was in constant contact with the OFC - including its first female member, Eileen Cotto (whose rumored phone sex *nom de plume* is "Bubbles Cougar Cotto") - who were all running a continuous feed doing everything they could to get me to laugh when the barber's straight edge was by an artery or an ear. All the while BC was on Google trying to pinpoint my location so he could launch a preemptive missile strike. He kept asking those questions seeking geographic markers. (I give him his props locating the barber located by the Ace Hardware store along the railroad tracks in Berthoud). In the introductory photo, I was amusing my now new favorite barber, "Mike", known only because that was the name printed on the card on his mirror, by showing him the interdimensional effects I had mastered with my Hadron. . . er, uh, cell phone, and while

showing him those alternate universes, I explained that anything bad that could happen to me, as wished by the OFC in this universe, could only happen to the alternate me, in one of those other universes, so he was safe to use his straight razor. He told me I was crazy, and then proceeded to give me the best head shave and beard trim I have ever experienced. (I am compelled here to reference Joe Serrano's texts this weekend comparing this project to his brazillianed scrotum). Anyway, Mike did a hell of a job and I did not come away looking like Van Gogh:



Although I do notice that same spark of creative madness in the corner of my left eye. Transitioning now to recount an interesting encounter that occurred earlier Saturday morning, I had just dropped Lisa off at work at 5:45

am and decided to stop at the Longmont King Sooper to top off my carrot stash so I would have enough to prep for the week, and while I was waiting a few minutes for the store to open, I spotted what I thought was one of the outdoor locals sitting on a bench way off to the right of the entrance with a book open on their lap. The way the person was hunched over the book, with their long pastel died hair cascading over both sides of their body, I could not tell if the person was awake or asleep. Anyway, I did my shopping and when I was driving by the figure on the way out of the parking lot, I noticed that the book in her lap was one of those leather bound journals and that she was furiously scribbling in it. Intrigued, I pulled over and asked her what she was doing.

Jackie, as the young woman introduced herself, turned out to be a young writer who was working on her first novel. Now I find my inspiration in the strangest of places, so a King Soopers' parking lot, pre-dawn, did not strike me as odd. I asked her if she liked to read, and when she informed me that her room at home was full of books, I grabbed a set of The Claire Trilogy, inscribed them to her (wishing her good luck with her book) and handed them off. She seemed pretty pleased, and maybe that brief encounter will make its way into one of her stories. Good luck young lady.

There was also a hilarious Limerick throwdown among the OFC members with Joe's bald scrotum and Bubbles encounter with a half dozen palmy men (plus a bartender) as the main inspiration that made for a pleasant Palm Sunday afternoon. Joe is just a natural. Eileen is a pisser.

Finally, I got to inscribe and send out a hardcover set of The Claire Trilogy to my dear friends and co-conspirators Jimmy and Kathy Fronsdaahl!



Well, I have to cut this short because I got to it late this morning after having dropped Lisa off at Denver Airport at 4 am for her flight to Atlanta and then to Florida (with my daughter, Jackie) for her sister's memorial service. I remained behind to care for the animals and property.

But Monday awaits us all, so lets get at it.

Thank God I already cuddled my kitty and did my rounds before blogging this morning.

But the rest of you fine, five readers have a wonderful day.

A Most Magical Gala - Thank You Dianne Rosenfeld

April 10, 2022



So last night I was absolutely honored to attend "A Furry Tail" Gala at the Hilton in Ft. Collins, Colorado. I was a guest of one of the Gold Sponsors of the event - my dear friend Dianne Rosenfeld.



The other attendees at our table were the core of the group of Diane's friends that attended at my first ever reading at Dianne's house about a year ago. They are a wonderful bunch.

It was quite the event. A lot of people were in fancy dress - wizards, fairies, little red riding hood, a wonderful woman dressed in a wolf costume. And we had a special guest, Outlaw, one of the wolves from the sanctuary.



The opening speaker for the night was Marlon Reis, the husband of Governor Jared Polis, who impressed me with his knowledge and passion concerning the process of reintroduction of the grey wolf to Colorado. The final guest speaker of the night was Suzanne Asha Stone, the Executive Director of the International Wildlife Co-Existence Network, who after reading from her wonderful reimagining of the Little Red Riding Hood story, gave a brilliant lecture on the front line battles to safely and cooperatively reintroduce wolves to the north and western states and beyond. There was a film of the wolves that passed over the last year which was as beautiful as it was heart wrenching.

There was a silent auction of absolutely wonderful items but then there was also a Guardian Angel bidding where people stepped up to sponsor a set of the newest additions to the wolf sanctuary, and finally a live auction.

Well Dianne had sponsored this beautiful alpha-female wolf named Isabeau, who, along with her mate Nashoba, had passed last year.

Izzy was evidently the queen wolf at the sanctuary who allegedly was far more interested in men but had formed a primal connection to Dianne during their first meeting. However, always paying forward, Dianne stepped up last night as a Guardian Angel to sponsor a recently acquired young rescue that Dianne got to name Topaz.

As amazing as the entire night was for this Bronx boy, the highlight for me was observing the bidding for the Queen Isabeau Shawl by

the talented local artist Kris Page. The artist collected fur from the wolf after it passed and through detailed hand spinning wove it into this magical shawl. It was not only beautiful, but the owner of that shawl carried the energy of that amazing creature forever. I knew Dianne was going to go for it.

However, when the item came up for auction, the bidding was preempted by a mystery telephone bidder who bid \$100,000.00 over the phone and took the shawl off the podium. Everyone's collective jaw hit their table. I could see that Dianne was devastated. But here's where the real magic occurred.

It seems that Kris Page had collected enough fur for a second Queen Isabeau shawl, and committed, through this incredible auctioneer, to creating it for the winner of the follow-up bidding. I felt like I was attending a Sothebys' auction for a newly discovered Van Gogh, as the yet unwoven shawl became a paddle battle between Dianne and the rest of the room. With fire in her eyes she never lowered her paddle. The numbers were causing my head to spin but Dianne was not to be denied a second time. I thought I was going to have a heart attack just listening to the number rise.

Finally it was down to Dianne and one blonde woman from a nearby table, as the bids crossed the room with the speed of Chinese ping-pong demonstration. But Dianne never faltered and after an intense bidding flurry finally secured her forever connection to this magnificent creature. I could hear the faintest sound of Izzy's howl across the veil as the declaration "sold" was shouted by the auctioneer, while pointing to Dianne. Izzy would be going to her new forever home at Casa Rosenfeld. Just where she belonged. After a moment of tears (some were mine) and recovery, this was followed by Shelley Coldiron's (great haircut Shelly) exciting slide show displaying the work being accomplished at the WOLF Sanctuary's new home in Red Feathers. I cannot wait for it to open so I can visit. Here is the present roster:



Anyway, I will report more on this magical evening as the memories return, but I had to share these highlights.

If BC ever comes to visit, I hope I can take him there.

For all of you readers out there, go onto the internet and study up on wolves and other necessary elements to our natural ecosystem.

You'll be amazed. They are not the scary creatures from the fairytales. They are truly noble beasts.

And a final heart felt thank you to Dianne Rosenfeld for allowing me to attend this wonderful event as her guest. A truly heady experience.

Well, my feral kitty may not be a wolf, but she demands her cuddling. And then morning rounds and some more chores.

But you fine, five readers make this your day of rest.

And have a wonderful day.

Hemingway Mojo - The Return Of BC - Raffaella

April 9, 2022



Every house and location draws its energy from what occurs there. It's residual. So when my dear friend Anna Hillman agreed to bring

a complete set of The Claire Trilogy down to Hemingway's Key West home, I was thrilled. Cannot have too much of that mythic writer's mojo when it comes to trying to break into the business.

Thank you Anna. You are the best.

Speaking of weird energy, my old friend BC, whose character arises as the new Voldemort in KMAG, has been on the run since the book dropped two weeks ago. BC has been following these blogs every day as he (and his ever patient wife, the lovely Nan) moved from one B&B to another across the country wearing various disguises to avoid being stoned by Claire's loyal fans. Well yesterday, BC finally ran out of underwear, having worn holes in the two pairs he had taken with him, so he had to return to his homestead to replenish his stock with his last pair. Of course, during that time his inscribed copy of KMAG had arrived at his door at his home in Rochester New York. He had instructed his neighbors not to touch it in his absence, fearing residual liability. Having worked himself into a proper and totally appropriate level of paranoia, BC was not going to take any chances when he saw the package sitting at his front door. I understand he submerged it in a bucket of water for several hours before opening it.



Of course, anticipating this, I was careful to follow that wise saying "keep your powder dry" by wrapping the book in several layers of waterproof celophane before placing it in its mail envelope. Enjoy the read, BC. Welcome to literary immortality (even if it may impact your "other" mortality).

I immediately updated Claire concerning the BC matter,



who agreed that we should convene a family council on Zoom to discuss the next steps with respect to BC. I will say that Claire was doubly upset that I interrupted her morning snack.

But she is definitely pleased with this morning's news that K MAG remains the Amazon #1 New Release in Dark Comedy on day 16.

3:47



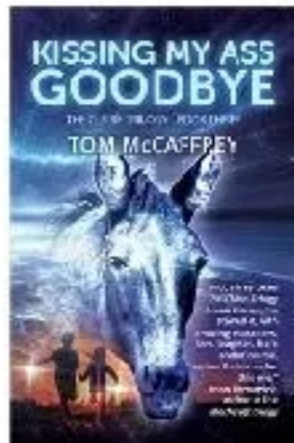
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So this morning Claire declared "BC can keep for now. Or can he?!" (speaking of Colorado, note to all of those five readers that are South Park fans, Bronx people say and thus hear the words "can he" like "Kenny" so draw your own conclusions as to the message I received).

Anyway, I am thrilled to be back blogging after my genius and operatic law partner sang me through my setting up the new mega capacity storage system in my beloved computer (on which I have written all three novels).

He also mentioned that his Rock Star daughter, *Raffaella*, will be performing live in Denver on July 29th. It is at the top of my bucket list to see this amazing Troubadour perform live - I have seen her videos - e.g. -

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=raffaella&docid=608042617780904940&mid=F0791AAEFBDB85403356F0791AAEFBDB85403356&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

(Note, 1956 was an amazing year and yes, I had the hots for Brigitte Bardot as a young man)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljS_qtcYiE

(Note, in the second video - Bruce Willis - Robert does a cameo as the older dude sleeping in a bed. Raff has dozens of songs/videos you can find on YouTube.)

I strongly recommend that anyone who wants to hear a night of magical music, look up Raff's concert schedule and catch her at a venue near you this summer. I'm hoping Robert can pull some strings and get me back stage passes.

Anyway, today is very special because tonight I am attending a gala for a local, Northern Colorado, Wolf Sanctuary, with my dear friend Dianne Rosenfeld. I shall be bringing a photo of BC with me to show my howling brothers.

But before I get there there are a ton of chores to complete, and before that, a kitty to cuddle and rounds to make.

So I must flee.

But the rest of your fine, five readers should go out and do something memorable on this wonderful Saturday.

And make it a great one!

Technical Difficulties - Back Tomorrow

April 8, 2022

Okay so I hope today will be a one off and that the external harddrive I received last night will allow me to reconfigure my storage so I can run my computer the way I want to and not be begging it for enough storage each day to upload a photo or open a document.

Wish me luck.

And it's Friday, so I expect nothing but success.

Until tomorrow, you fine, five readers go out and end the work week with a smile.

ANd have a great day.

Double Your Pleasure. . .

April 7, 2022



My brother-in-law Seth Varden Beaugsignoir a/k/a "Beau" was blessed with the role of driving me crazy. It is his *raison d'être*. |

know, I know, that's a very short trip at best, given that I was born within spitting distance of my madness.

Beau married my lovely and brilliant SIL (way above his league - the true curse of all of the Wallen Witches), Cathy "Coolness" Wallen - who I must share is also a brilliant writer who is also in my inside reader's circle and suggested two minor structural changes to The Claire Trilogy narrative that I believe made a big difference in the final product. Thank you Coolness.

Beau is also in that inner circle of readers, starting with AAA (I had a very small circle for TWA - only Lisa, Lenny & Helen as I wrote it - Dina (my mystical 1/2 elf, 1/2 witch SIL came on board after the first draft was done - to vet it on a mystical level)), because I knew that if I could get Beau hooked on my story, it would appeal to anyone. I really expected Beau to hate my story, or at least tell me he hated it, just to break my balls. Because that is who he is.

Beau is affectionately referred to by my children and their Wallen related cousins as Babu (phon. "Bah Boo"). He is that favorite uncle who - when we visited upstate New York - would come into the room and get down on the floor with my already feral children and work them up into a rampage just when Lisa and I were trying to get them to settle down. Then, mission accomplished - for they, in true McCaffrey sibling fashion, were now trying to kill one another - he would go out with his friends and leave us with the carnage.

He was Peter Pan.

He also had the Life of Riley. He had a great job as a teacher, a few hours of actual classes a week, and all of his students loved him. He coached basketball (a great coach who often worked with my daughter Jackie, who went on to play D1) and did whatever else he wanted to do. Beau would not know stress if it bit him in the ass. But he loved to ratchet up my cortisol to critical levels whenever the opportunity presented itself. For example, whenever one of us was visiting the other, he loved to come into the room and begin to tell me what a tough day he had, knowing that I was enslaved as a young associate at a NYC lawfirm, who was working ridiculous hours and was usually spending half of any "vacation" dealing with projects I had purportedly left behind in the City.

In short, Beau was charming and lovable, and I regularly used to plot his demise. And worst of all, he is an identical twin.

Left to right, meet Victor and Seth Beausignoir.

When Beau (Seth) learned from his lovely wife that I had written TWA, he wanted to read it. I suspected a trap.

With great trepidation I sent him the final version of TWA and held my breath.

To my utter astonishment, Beau burned through it and reported back that he thoroughly enjoyed it, and commented that the whole experience invoked the song "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Airplane. He also surprised me by giving me a solid breakdown of his responses to the details of the story.

Given that I was about to begin working on the sequel, I asked Beau if he would be willing to read book two as I wrote it. He responded that he was now retired - another dig knowing I will die at my work desk - and had plenty of free time, so why not. Beau turned out to be one of my most responsive readers in the inner circle, usually turning around any chapter I sent him within 24 hours. Those responses always involved a clear demonstration of his mastery of the characters and facts, but also his emotional responses to the events as they unfolded. Indeed, he started to push me to write faster, with regular text reminders that he was anxiously awaiting the next installment.

I'm pretty certain he was the first to finish the completed AAA transcript. He volunteered that he actually liked it more than the first book. He immediately demanded that I continue the story. Now at this point I was already beginning to play the film version of KMAG in my head, so I knew I wanted to create a memorable antagonist in that story. So, to up the ante, I doubled my pleasure and asked Beau if he would mind if I included him and his brother "Victor" as characters in the third book. I explained that they were going to be bad guys who get their just desserts. The Beausignoir brothers were all in. I tweaked them to make them younger but I channeled all of the frustration a lifetime of Beau had caused me into my feelings about those characters, and the rest, as they say, is history. Thanks Beau. Nothing makes me happier than locking you and your brother into the fantasy world of KMAG forever. Payback is a bitch!

Of course, once they realized that they were trapped in my fantasy world forever, their photo changed and they showed their true colors:



Thanks guys. Claire says hello. She can't wait to meet you. Get those shovels ready.
As they say, he who laughs last. . . .

I awoke very early today (12:30 am) with the first sentence of The Riverdale Chronicles looping in my head WHICH WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO GO BACK TO SLEEP. I cannot begin to write it until I get through a MF of a legal motion I must complete - but I am very excited knowing, given the process for the first three novels, I will begin to write at some point in the near future. Upon looking at my phone screen when I finally rolled out of bed (1:11 am), I spotted a cool tweet from one of my cool Cali writer friends that I follow on Twitter (her blog site is <http://skaymurphy.blogspot.com> - turns out she is another part legal vampire/bard - and here's a great article about her very interesting family background, including her great-granny:

<https://blairdenholm.com/2020/04/14/crime-author-s-kay-murphy/#:~:text=S.>

[%20Kay%20Murphy%20is%20the%20author%20of%20four,Book%20title%3A%20The%20Tainted%20Legacy%20of%20Bertha%20Gifford](#)

seriously you have to check this out. I took this tweet as a sign that the literary quickening is occurring and I shall soon begin to put words on screen:

S Kay Murphy

[@kayzpen](#)

Hey, [@wisecelt](#)

, guess what I downloaded last night because the past week has stressed me to the point of breaking and I need to read a book that will zip along like the way Bonnie drives? You guessed it: An Alien Appeal. Thanks, Buddy. It's helping. [#amreading](#)

You see, the character Bonnie (my sister Veronica does drive like Mr. Magoo) is in that first scene playing out in my head.

Synchronicity is fun.

Thanks for that tweet SKM. You rock! Enjoy AAA.

Well, I'm hoping the new external hard drive that my patient, brilliant and hilarious partner Robert (never Bobby) Meloni - the main mafia lawyer in The Claire Trilogy - sent me arrives this morning so I can

stop gerry-rigging my computer storage issues and actually complete the MF of a motion I need to deal with (it took me 45 minutes this morning just to scrape together enough storage space to download the two twin photos).

Anyway, it is Thursday, and my kitty awaits her cuddles and breakfast. Then to my morning rounds.

You fine, five readers, go out there and take care of all of your business, so that tomorrow is a coaster.

But most of all, have a great day.

PS: KMAG is fourteen days out of the gate and still remains Amazon #1 New Release in Dark Humour. All three books remain in the top 20 in that category. Thank you readers.

Call The Midwife & Other Fine Characters

April 6, 2022



The reviewers for all three books in *The Claire Trilogy* have often expressed their wish to get to hang with friends like those characters that appear in the books. I have been blessed over this long life to have been able to do so. As a result, I have been able to capture a lot of their personalities through osmosis. For example, when I was writing AAA, Eileen Cotto (né Collins, that's herself, above) was invaluable in assisting me with getting the second book in *The Claire Trilogy* finalized in a timely fashion. She gamely stepped into the very large shoes of my dear friend Jimmy (the shapeshifting character "Whitey" in AAA/KMAG) Fronsahl (directly below),



who had edited TWA and then moved to Idaho with his lovely wife - and Claire cover photographer - Kathy F. (Love you both)

To reward Eileen for her services I asked if she wanted to be in the third novel. She agreed, and Eileen Cotto, the vet turned midwife in *KMAG* was born.

For the record, I can state without reservation that Eileen is far more crazy than her character, and can easily drink that character - and all of the others combined - right under the table. She is a force of nature. But fair warning, do not party with this woman unless you want to feel like Jimmy Moran the day after he met Everett and Michelle.

What made this whole literary journey even more fun was the fact that the other members of the OFC were also included in the *KMAG* installment of *TCT*, so I was able to have many of my childhood friends, including Lenahan (who also appeared in the two earlier books), and Joe S, BC (where are my stones?), Stein and even Jackie Vaughan in the mix. All of the characters in *TCT* are also my friends, or family, but this smaller group were from a time when we were all carousing at Aunt Violet's Flop House, and throughout Riverdale and beyond. They know where most of the skeletons are buried. Indeed, they each carried a spade in their car trunks for just those emergencies. So I like the idea that they will be carousing around for eternity on these book pages.

Eileen was also invaluable to me in getting *KMAG* finalized, as was her sister Anne Rifenburg (né Collins), who caught an amazing mix-up between the end of one scene and the beginning of the next that could have proven quite embarrassing once the internet trolls found it. And trust me, they would have. Thank you Anne.

So when Eileen received her copy of *KMAG*, she snapped this photo and sent it to me. Thank you Eileen. I greatly appreciate all of the help as well as our collective history and the Collins Clan I call family. Welcome to literary immortality.

Lenahan, of course has been a staple character from early in *The Claire Trilogy*, as well as a friend and confidant for half a century, and, as a world class chef, did provide me invaluable advice for that scene in *TWA* where Dan and Jimmy dine in the restaurant in Little Italy in Manhattan. As a wonderful writer, he also offered his narrative insights as one of the inner circle of readers for all three novels. And his character's personality cannot hold a candle to the real man. Well Lenny's copy of *KMAG* arrived yesterday so he sent

me this photo taken inside the An Beal Bacht cafe, a fitting place for anything Irish and literary:



Now one of the final characters that appear in *KMAG* is a Fordham Law classmate of Jimmy Moran, named Jack Vaughan. If you have been paying attention to the acknowledgements, you'll know that Jack Vaughan was my first best friend. His wife, Sue, was a beautiful Yonkers girl who migrated to Riverdale to win his heart and

his family were surrogates to my own and an important reason I became a lawyer. And his gorgeous younger sister dated the Ginger. So here's another shout out to the Vaughan Family, Big Jack, Connie, Robin, Peter and their descendants and a photo of the man himself, Young Jack, a very accomplished attorney in NY (he graduated from FLS a few years before me, as I took a more circuitous path) holding his inscribed copies of *The Claire Trilogy*:



I would kill for Jackie's hairline and effortless youthful appearance. I'm thinking there's a painting of this man in some closet looking very poorly. Now Jackie's character arrived in *The Claire Trilogy* a bit late in the day, but you will see that he is crucial to Jimmy Moran's estate planning and the only person he trusts with his illicit fortune. If I ever had such a fortune, I would trust Jackie with it. And Jackie's appearance in *KMAG* suggests a future need for that fortune in some future story line with some of the younger characters (as well as the trilogy's most popular character). So in the end, I am trusting Jack Vaughan with my future literary legacy.



Last but not least among those that shared a photo of "himself" with the copy of *KMAG* that arrived in his mailbox yesterday, is the brilliant, talented and accomplished Celtic writer and auteur, Colin Broderick. Here is a man who has been a dear friend and incredibly supportive of my writing for a very long time now. We talk on the phone about once a week, he really has the most lovely brogue, and if I were ever to trade my creative life and

accomplishments with anyone, it would be Colin. Our families come from the same northern county in Ireland, we used to be neighbors in Riverdale, we both are graduates from the same Honors English program in Lehman College, and he even mentions me (by description) in a scene in his memoir, *Orangutan*. Last but not least, Colin also provided me with the now iconic "Grisham on mushrooms" blurb for the front cover of *TWA*. So here's the man himself:

Thank you brother.

Anyway, it's hump day, so hopefully more of the real life counterparts to the characters in *The Claire Trilogy* will receive their copies of *KMAG* and snap and send some photos I can share with the world in future postings.

But until then, the legal world awaits and I have a kitty to cuddle and rounds to make.

You fine, five readers enjoy your day. I can hear Friday's siren song in the distance.

But whatever you do, make it a great one.

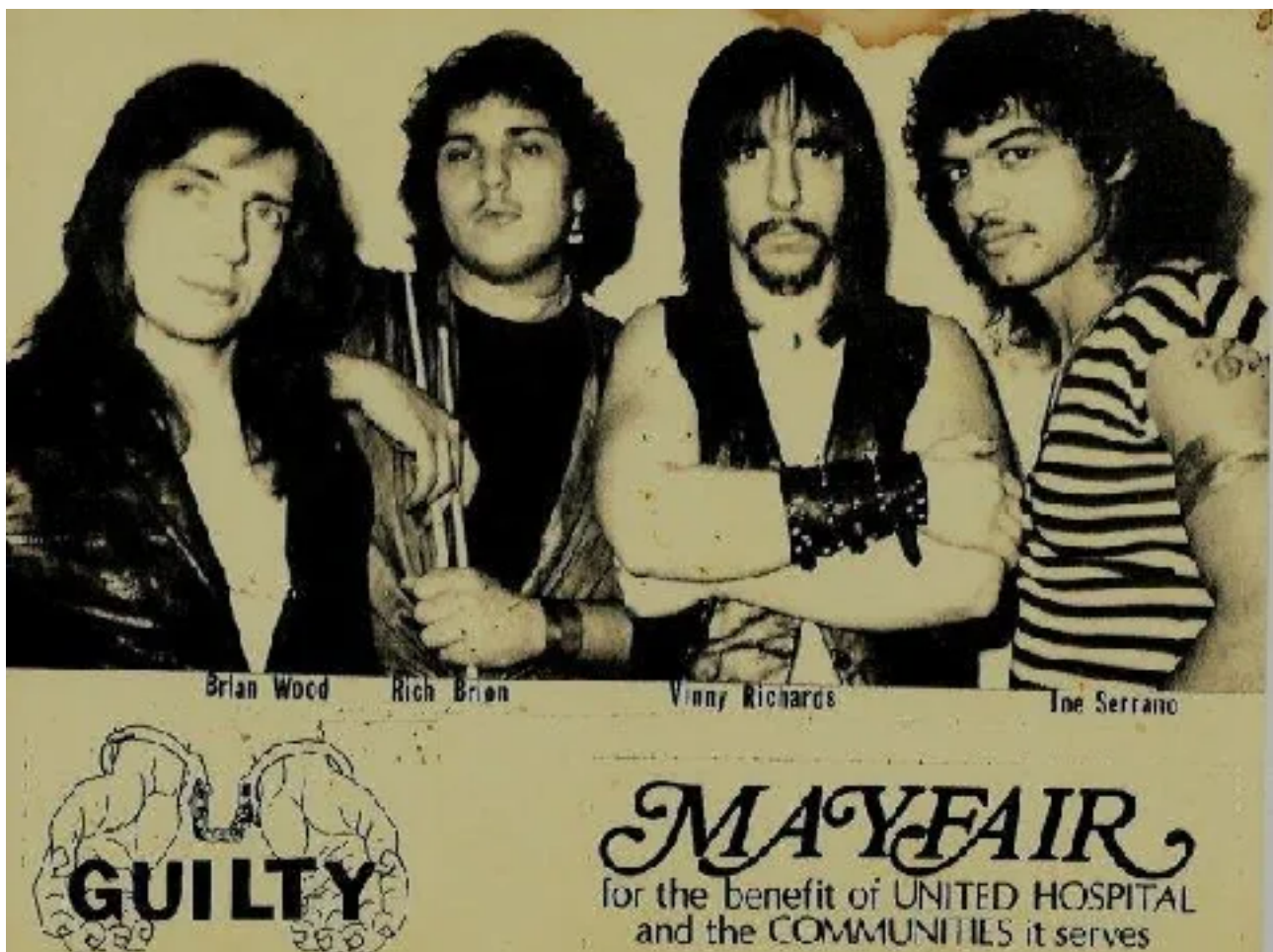
Joey Serrano Wins!

April 5, 2022



The above photo is of the unkillable Joe Serrano, a paid-in, lifetime member of the OFC, childhood friend and onetime flatmate of Aunt Violet's Flop House. His younger version is also the basis for one

of the bad guys in KMAG. Of course, that character looked more like this Joey (far right):



Which is how Joey looked during the wonder years back in the day. And yes, like the band's name, Joe was as guilty as they come. I intend to rely heavily on Joe stories when I write the prequel to The Claire Trilogy, which is tentatively titled The Riverdale Chronicles (in my head), but now that I have used Joe's real name in TCT, I'll have to come up with a cool cover name. I am open to any suggestions for his TRC character name from my readers. Well, anyway, when I sent out every character's inscribed copy of KMAG last week, they all went out at one time. I understand that the Berthoud P.O. had to bring in their Christmas help to process the load. Joe was the first to report back that he had received his copy via the above photo. He also earned extra points for securing his own hard copy of KMAG. So he gets this morning's headline.

Congrats Joe, and thanks for being so damn interesting and such a great sport throughout our lives. Cannot wait to have fun with your character in the next installment.

You can stop holding in that belly now.

Okay, I had storage issues with the computer this morning which required some skill, some luck and lots of time to fix this morning, so I started writing this kinda late. So I need to cut this short.

The rest of you KMAG characters send in those photos.

I have a kitty to cuddle and rounds to make, so I bid you all good day.

But make yours a great one.

Matthew 25:40 - Pay It Forward

April 4, 2022



I have mentioned many times how lucky I've been. Throughout my life (I realize this in hindsight). But even more so over the past few years. So I really do try to pay it forward whenever the universe presents an opportunity to do so.

Back in the 70s, if I didn't have access to a car or public transportation, I would hitchhike. Now the world was a lot simpler

then, and while there were such things like serial killers, for the most part, people were decent, law abiding folk.

My father was prone to picking up hitchhikers if they were service members. And I remember a few times making room for duffel bags as my father told us to jump in the back of the station wagon to allow the service members access to the back seat. This was just another opportunity for St. Edward of the Strays to reach out and help someone.

Now today's world has become a lot darker. More dangerous. You really have to be warey of your fellow man. But you have to balance that with the fact that you cannot surrender your humanity to fear.

Anyway, early yesterday morning I went out to Walmarts to pick Lisa up some over-the-counter cough medication for a chest cold she was suffering. That required that I drive the ten plus miles to the northern tip of Longmont, south down Route 287. Now this is one continous stretch, so if a pedestrian is walking along it, they are in for the long haul, unless they are lucky enough to catch a ride with someone.

There is a free bus that runs along this route, but it is sporadic, and if you miss the bus, literally and figuratively as in life, you can be screwed. Sunday mornings are the worst on this point.

Most of the time, pedestrians are heading North along 287 towards Berthoud or Loveland or even Ft. Collins. Beyond that lies Wyoming. And Sea Monsters.

Whenever I drive that stretch, if I spot someone making their way, and they don't look - through my New York sensitive, discerning eye that has sized up creeps and scumbags all of my life - I say to the universe, if that person is still walking north by the time I'm heading back that way, I'll offer them a ride. The few times I've had to keep my promise, it's usually no further than back to Berthoud, and just once to Loveland. Most of the time someone else gives them a lift and lets me off the hook.

Yesterday I spotted a young man, about a mile north of Longmont, head down, trudging along like he was committed to the fact that the world wasn't going to do him any favors. It was overcast and still cold. I had the car heater on. So I made my deal with the universe and continued down to Walmarts and went shopping.

Now when you go shopping at Walmarts, you make sure that while you are there you pick up whatever else you may need. With me that is always carrots and apples, and oftentimes coffee and milk, and dog and cat food. They have a tendency to run low quickly in my house.

So, 45 minutes later, I was checking out, and I made sure to draw an extra twenty dollar bill cash back. I like to have some cash on me.

Anyway, I was back in my car heading North on 287, having completely forgotten my deal with the universe, when low and behold, I spotted the intendee of my promise. I spent that quarter mile arguing with the Universe in my best legaleze as to why the statute of limitations had run on that promise and actually I passed the pedestrian at a good rate of speed for the perfect excuse as to why it would have been unsafe to pull over at that point.

But I made the mistake of catching a glimpse of this kid as I went by. His face had a stray dog look to it, and told me that he didn't expect any favors in life. He didn't even look over at the car as it passed.

I pulled over about 100 feet down the highway, so I could get a good look at this guy and make sure my spidey sense wasn't picking up anything hinkey. I called out "How far you going?"

Praying for Berthoud to be his response. I rolled snake eyes, he called back "Ft. Collins."

Now FC is about a half hour north of Berthoud. I cursed my luck.

But the universe was surely watching, so I couldn't renege on my promise.

I watched as he got closer, looking for any sign that he might be carrying a weapon. If you conceal carry, you know where to look. He looked clean.

He also looked younger than I expected, although he had a beard.

I thought of my own kids and figured I would want someone to help them if they were alone and in need.

"Get in," I shouted and hopped back in the car.

I watched in my side view mirror as he hustled the last few yards to the car. "This is your lucky day." I said as he hopped in the passenger seat and snapped himself into his seatbelt. The whole time I could not help but wonder if my own luck would hold.

It did.

HR (his initials) was a nice kid. His clothes were relatively clean and he didn't smell like someone who was ruffing it outdoors. But he was tired and cold, and when I asked if he wanted to turn down the heat he was quick to say "no thank you."

He let his eyes close but did his best to engage in a conversation.

He had been working recently as an intake associate at Good Will and was heading north to meet some friends in Ft. Collins. He was hoping to get work in a restaurant up there. I could tell he was a good kid.

He asked me what I did, and I told him. And he volunteered that he like to read every night before he went to sleep.

Anyway, a half hour later he pointed to a spot and said that would be perfect, so I pulled into the next drive, which turned out to be Colorado State University. As he was getting out I reached back in the back seat and grabbed a set of my novels (I try to have some to hand around), and inscribed them to HR. He was thrilled. And then I asked him if he had eaten, and he volunteered that he had not.

So I handed him the twenty from Walmart and told him to go get him self some breakfast. I told him to "pay ot forward."

He was openly appreciative, packed the books in his back pack and then with a wave headed back south. I had to turn north and go a few blocks before I could turn around and head back towards Berthoud. I called Lisa to let her know why I was running late and was just about to put the phone on the seat next to me when I spotted HR. And he had taken my suggestion and was no doubt on his way to a delicious breakfast burrito and hot coffee.

As a father, I wish him luck.

So while I highly recommend that people avoid hitchhiking or picking up strangers. Sometimes it works out. But if you can do someone a solid in some other way, there is always a benefit. Even if it is just you feeling a little better about the world you live in.

And a promise to the universe is one I don't break lightly, especially when it has been so good to me.

Well anyway, the work week awaits and I have a kitten to cuddle and rounds to make.

So I will leave you fine, five readers to your preparations.

Have a great one.

Papernerd And Dianne Rosenfeld

April 3, 2022

I read every review, the good ones multiple times and the bad ones just once.

I've mentioned many times how much I appreciate anyone who will make the time to read my books and take the time to share their experience, with not just me, but with the world of people and potential readers on Amazon and other literary websites.

Every once in a while my books get a review posted that stands out because the reader shares some of their personal life in a way that allows me the privilege of getting to know them, if only a little bit.

I mentioned a week or so ago how one of the marketing devices that I became involved with through BRW was a Goodreads give away, wherein ten readers were selected in a contest run by Goodreads to receive an inscribed copy of one of my books, in this case, TWA. Well I was happy to inscribe and send out the copies, and just for good measure, I snapped and printed selfies of me signing each book and tucked them in the book with a note, as an additional authentication that it was me signing them.

Well, one of the winners of the last contest, Elise X, a/k/a Papernerd, from Illinois, first reached out to me through BRW to thank me for sending the book. That in itself was both unexpected and unnecessary, given that she was a legitimate prize winner and deserved her winnings. But then she posted this amazing review of TWA that reminded me of why I write, which is to tell stories to a world full of strangers with the hopes that they get some enjoyment out of the time they spend with the work. Elise's review was actually a twofer, given that she foreshadowed what was to come in AAA as well.

I had to share Elise's review:

"I received this wonderful book for free in the goodreads giveaway and it not only arrived here in speedy time (within a week), but also noted and autographed by the author !

First off:

This book was a truly fun ride, and I haven't enjoyed truly fun and entertaining books lately.

So therefor it stands out already !

Would YOU like this book ?

Well, do you like any of the following:

- Legal/Gangster/Mob stories ? (main character is a lawyer, working for the mob)
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy ? (inter-galactical neighbors)
- Cozy Mysteries ? (lots of new friends in a small town sticking together against the mob)
- Time Travel ? (Author reminds us of the 80's and 90's)
- Animals ? (Speaking Mule)
- Irish people ?(Gotta love them - I am myself known to occasionally enjoying drinking a Guinness while listening to Floggin' Molly)

So in general:

This book has something for everyone, including Sci-Fi, Paranormal, Mystery, Crime, and so much more !

The story had me so intrigued, that once I started reading, I only stopped because I could not stay awake all night long to finish it...because I have a job, which my life literally depends on (since I am a single woman living in a small town with no chance to find a husband, that can support my reading habits and my dog's psychotic outbreaks - the only ones that would fit my criteria already have found and married women with similar habits already...).

So unfortunately, I was not able to finish the book in one sitting - but I truly wanted to !

So by day 2 reading this outstanding book, I was sad, that the story was over...

But wait:

The author notated, that this was only book # 1 in a trilogy.

So what does one do ?

Look the trilogy up, and there it was !

Since I just had received my paycheck, and wanted the next two books IMMEDIATELY (because who has the time to wait for exciting books to come in the mail ?), I bought the kindle versions.

See, there's two kinds of people:

Bed-wetters and Bed-readers.

I am the latter, and with buying the kindle versions, I don't have to wear my reading glasses in bed, which otherwise would be highly un-comfortable...

And guess, what ?

I am reading book # 2 right now.

Because our main character is now visiting his sister that he hadn't seen in 30 years and travels to Great Britain, to quickly find out, that she has some familiar abilities as well.

And that's all I'm saying - the rest, you have to find out all by yourself !

I have to honestly say that I did not expect to be so drawn in to a book, as I was into this one.

I guess, not all surprises are bad (because usually they are - at least in my life).

I would highly recommend this book, I enjoyed it greatly and can not thank the author enough for such an exciting, fun, and beautiful ride.

Made me a fan, that's for sure !"

So thank you Elise X, a/k/a Papernerd, for reading my books and taking the time and making the effort to post your review. I greatly appreciate it.

Here's a Guinness for the next time you listen to Flogging Molly



And if anyone needs a reminder:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=flogging+molly&view=detail&mid=17E056D40F9BD925BC4217E056D40F9BD925BC42&FORM=VIRE>

Speaking of inscribing books, yesterday morning I had the absolute pleasure of stopping off at the exquisite home of my dear friend, member of my inner circle of readers and literary confident, Dianne Rosenfeld, to drop off an inscribed copy of KMAG.

Dianne is a lovely woman who has been an amazing supporter of my work, and even hosted my first ever reading of TWA at her salon with her friends. Visiting with Dianne is like topping off your positive energy reserves, you always come away feeling great.

She is my modern day version of the Parisian literary supporter of the Lost Generation, Gertrude Stein. She supports people and causes, like a Wolf Rescue in the Ft. Collins area. And she provides that support generously and selflessly.

Anyway, while I was there I had the honor of inscribing copies of my books that Dianne keeps to share with her visitors - as you would expect, this woman has a lot of wonderful friends - which allowed us time to catch up.

But Dianne is so enchanting that long after I stopped signing, I found myself still sitting in her office, captivated by our conversation about the meaning of life. She has the charisma and wisdom of my favorite sage Wayne Dyer (RIP - although we're still in touch).

I also had the pleasure of cuddling her beautiful doxies, Becca and Lena, who have won the dog lottery by joining her family. And they know it.

Finally, I am really looking forward to attending an event for the Wolf Rescue on April 9th. I will be sure to share that experience here when I get back.

Anyway, yesterday's personal extravagance means that I still have weekend chores to do, and it was absolutely worth it.

So its off for my morning kitty cuddle and rounds, and then a week's worth of veggie/fruit chopping with Claire and Honey taking their share at my doorway.

Life doesn't get any better than this.

So, the rest of you fine, five readers, take advantage of whatever religion works for you and make this a day of rest.

And if you can put your feet up, put a book in your hands and truly make it a memorable experience.

But most of all, have a great day!

Oh, and KMAG remains the #1 New Release in Dark Humour, so my day is off to a great start.

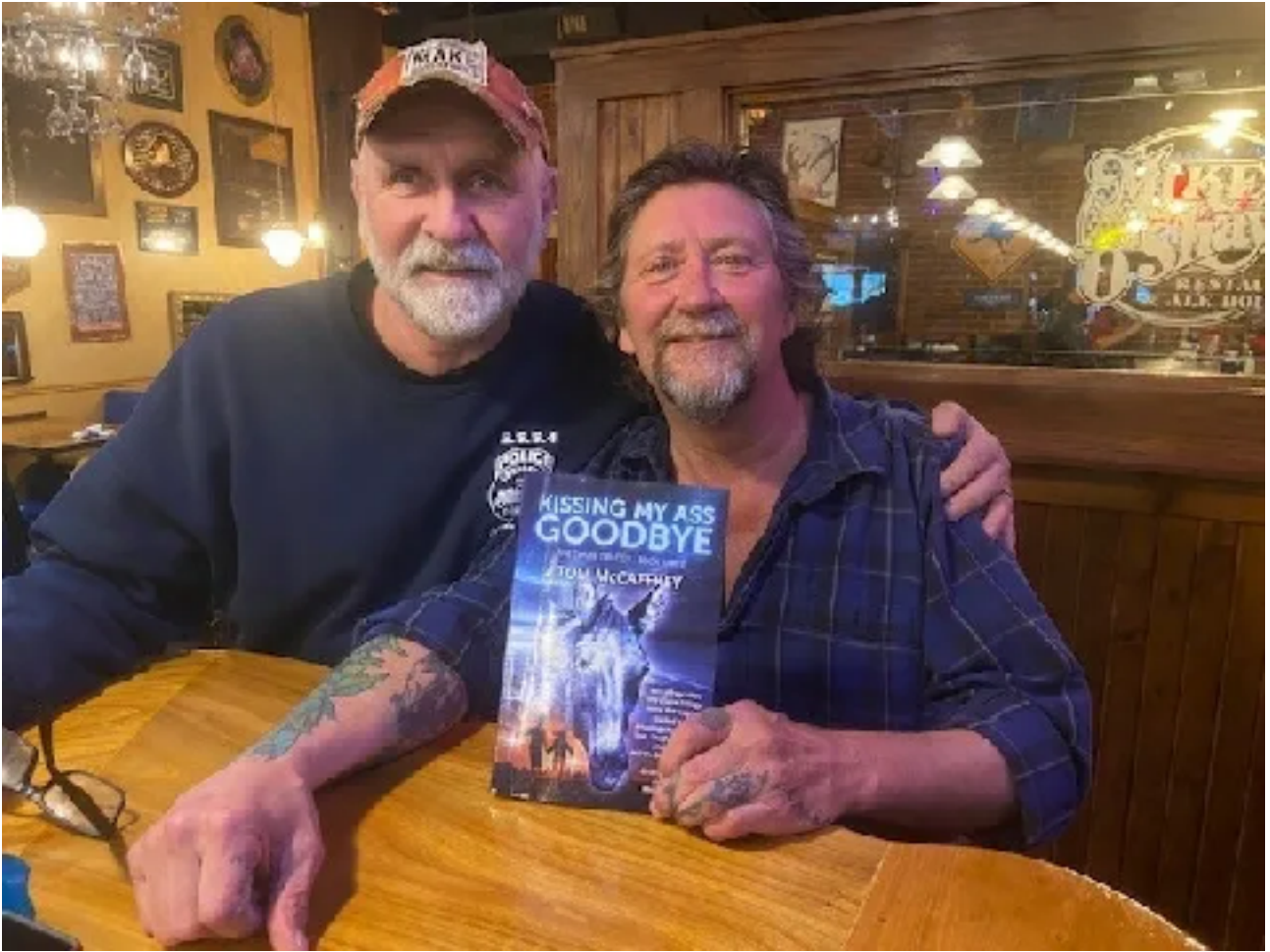
"I think you broke my dad." The Frightening Power of KMAG

April 2, 2022



It seems that whenever Claire sees me come out back with a book in my hand, she feels she has to throw on the cover shot for the photo. It is like her "Blue Steel" signature pose. Its frightening how accurately she can repeat the process. Yesterday afternoon was no different. Spooky.

Anyway, I have mentioned in the recent past that the MOS in-house McCaffrey scholar, Kyle, was now reading KMAG.



I've also shared that Kyle's lovely daughter Shelby. . .



(That's Shelby with one of her adorable children - I will insert his name once I remember to ask for it). . . on Kyle's strong recommendation, had also begun The Claire Trilogy. You can clearly see the genetic family resemblance here in all three generations. I would kill for those family cheekbones and that hairline.

Anyway, on Thursday Shelby sent me a DM on Twitter that stated: "Mr. McCaffrey, I'm loving this book. I'm about 3/4 of the way through it. I'm totally obsessed and now I desperately want a mule. But my question to you is..... what did you put in that 3rd book?!?! I think you broke my dad! I called him earlier, and we'll just say he was a little upset (to say the least)!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Now, I could not have the newly-anointed, world-renown McCaffrey Scholar, Kyle, upset with my work - it could kill my career before it started - I mean he's like Norm in Cheers, everybody knows his

name - so late yesterday afternoon, after completing our multi-week transition from Sprint to T-Mobile (Evan & Co. in the Longmont T-Mobile Store, you saved the day!) we swung around to MOS to see if we could catch Kyle, who likes to stop in there after work for his evening meal. We also wanted to curry favor and drop off inscribed copies of AAA and KMAG for Shelby, given that she is first in line as potential replacement McCaffrey Scholar should Kyle decide to hang up his glasses.

On the way into MOS, we saw Lonnie, who confirmed that he had noticed that Kyle had been in a bit of a funk, and had made some reference to "punching [me] in the face," based upon KMAG. I finally truly felt like I was back in New York.

Now I will share that the infamous BC, who along with Joe, Lenny, Eileen, Helen, Bobbi, Eddie, etc., makes his appearance in KMAG, had recently preposterously posited on the OFC group text that Kyle may actually turn out to be BC's biggest fan, and would become very upset with my poor treatment of his character in the book. (For the record, BC gets whatever he deserves in life and literature. Trust me, you will all be cheering. He is the new Voldemort.) There could be only one response to BC's prognostication - to quote the polymath poet, Lenahan - "Pssshhhhh! I said good day, Sir!"

But that did not mean I was off the hook, and I was determined to get to the bottom of these literary rumblings.

So I spotted Kyle holding court at his usual spot at the farthest end of the MOS bar, manned up, and slowly made my way in his direction, making sure to give Lisa one final kiss in case it turned out to be a final kiss. It was like walking The Green Mile.

Kyle, who was engrossed in something on his cell-phone, finally looked up and spotted me when I was about five feet away. He gave me a chilling Michael Corleone smile. I took one last look back at Lisa, who had already moved on and was chatting animatedly into her new cell phone, and realized that this may be it for me.

"Tom, how great to see you" can be said in many different ways with many different cadences and inflections. (For the record, I cannot recall anyone else ever saying those words - which speaks volumes about me). My mind quickly tried to analyze them now as those

words flowed from Kyle's lips. Luckily, I could see both of Kyle's hands on the bar, and no weapons in sight, so I continued towards him.

I immediately went for the distraction by asking Kyle if he had a pen (he did, and I made sure it was capped before reaching for it - I refer you all to Jason Bourne:

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Jason+Bourne+death+by+pen&view=detail&mid=CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088&FORM=VIRE)

[q=Jason+Bourne+death+by+pen&view=detail&mid=CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Jason+Bourne+death+by+pen&view=detail&mid=CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088CCA1ABE96ADB2C82088&FORM=VIRE))

Then I made a big production about inscribing the two books (with a promise to inscribe the first book if Shelby sent it in to MOS with Kyle) all the while standing at a safe distance on the other side of the bar. During the course of those signings, without actually looking over at him, I nonchalantly asked Kyle "So, what did you think of KMAG?"

Having taken many a blow to my face in this life (and probably others) - c'mon, I wasn't born this pretty - I braced myself for impact and that rotating ring of tweety birds that always follows it.

"I loved it!" came the unexpected reply.

Kyle then went into a twenty minute monologue sharing not only his mastery of the high points of the twists and turns of KMAG, but also demonstrating his genius in marshalling all of the interrelated facts and plot points from TWA and AAA. I was still in a bit of an "expecting the worst fog," but definitely recall the word "nipples" being spoken - it really is like a dog whistle to a healthy male - as Kyle continued his eloquent lecture on the epic, modern day fantasy, the soon to be renown *The Claire Trilogy*. This man should be a black-robed don at Oxford! Move over Tolkien and Carroll, Kyle has arrived!

I then mentioned how worried I was after Shelby suggested that I may have "broke [her] dad." And Kyle explained that he was sitting in a park on Thursday after work, enjoying himself while completely immersed in KMAG, when he hit a part in the story that emotionally devastated him, and at that particular moment, Shelby called him. (As an aside, I am suggesting that *The Claire Trilogy* has magical qualities which were transferred from this author during its writing and which can imbue its readers with psychic ability, how else to explain this clear example of synchronicity between these two

readers) That dark emotional cloud had followed Kyle into MOS where he admittedly may have uttered those words to Lonnie. But all was well now that he had finished the book. He loved the ending.

I slowly released my withheld breath in one of my best West of Ireland sighs, taught to me by my maternal grandfather, Poppa Burke - it has a slight whistling sound to it - and for the first time since I entered MOS, smiled.

Ten minutes later, we closed our animated discussion on the topic of the magnificent AI character "Jayney" (named by Everett after the blond siren from the 50s, Jayne Mansfield) and then after a cordial farewell, I returned to my booth where the ever patient and observant Lisa, who had noticed that I was not to be murdered, went ahead and ordered my favorite meal for me.

As the Bard said, "All's Well That Ends Well."

But I can say without reservation, that if anyone ever wants the best damn recitation and elucidation of the labyrinthian story of *The Claire Trilogy*, arrive at MOS on any given day at around 4 p.m., seek out Kyle at his spot at the far end of the bar and ask him his thoughts on *The Claire Trilogy*. Order a Macallan for good measure. If I were to die tomorrow, I would not want anyone else speaking on my literary behalf. Kyle just gets it. He is a Claire savant (<https://stmuscholars.org/savant-syndrome-the-phenomenon-of-natural-and-acquired-genius>).

Anyway, I have a lot of manual labor ahead of me this morning, those mule muffins aren't going to scoop themselves, and I still have a kittie to cuddle and rounds to make.

But the rest of you fine, five readers go out there and do something fun and wonderful.

And make this day a great one!

Oh, and if anyone is interested, KMAG, in just over its first week, still retains its #1 New Release title (thank you readers):

5:42



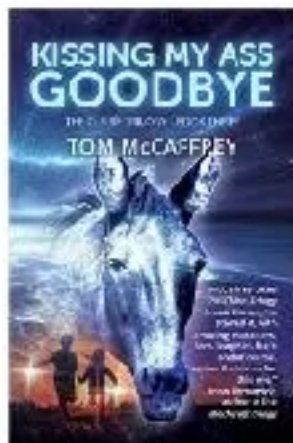
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Claire the Stoic - Happy Birthday To The Ginger

April 1, 2022



Yesterday, I spotted Honey taking a nap over in the remnants of the high grass where the pond used to be. I didn't see Claire, which is unusual because they are rarely more than 10 feet from each other.

So I wandered over to the west side of the deck which gave me a better view of the far east side of the back of the property, and there I saw Claire, standing on MR's grave, pawing the earth. I could tell she was sharing, the way my Mom would stand at my father's grave in Gates of Heaven Cemetery in Westchester, N.Y., and bring him up to date on all the family business. Honey was giving Claire a little space.

Now we Irish know that our ghosts are always around us. I for one take comfort in that. Indeed, walk into my house on any given day and I'm sure you'll hear one of my conversations, echoing up the stairs from my office lair in the dungeon.

But there is something about a grave site that gives one the feeling that your communications are a bit more private. The line is more direct. And you always know who is picking up that line of communication on the other side of the veil. Your message gets delivered.

That's the feeling I got watching Claire, head bowed, focused on what lies beneath that earth, her forever beau, Mister Rogers. That direct line of communication. I am certain that she was bringing him up to date on family matters, including the success of the family books.

I have never gotten over the trauma of MR's sudden passing. He was the most generous creature here on earth. I fight back tears every time I look at his grave. I am fighting them now, just writing this. And I know Claire continues to pine for him. But she's a stoic. So I left Claire to it, and went about my business. But the pain of losing MR stayed with me throughout the day.

Now I've told you all how Claire is not shy about coming to the window of my office that faces out back and extorting her carrots.

But there is another window that Claire sometimes will come to just to check on me. It faces the east along the rise from the back property and leads up to the driveway. It is a lane between the house and the side paddock. So later on, as I was staring intently at my screen trying to make sense of an opposition legal brief that was hurting my brain and making my eyes burn, I felt that stare and

looked up and saw Claire peeking through the window to see if I'm all right.



She looks in that particular window when she is not trying to get my attention. And sometimes I will look up just to see her turn away and head off to do something else. But yesterday she stayed and continued to stare until I gave her the nod letting her know I'm doing all right.

Because that is who Claire is and that is what she does.

I've had a lot of readers comment about how much they love Claire.

I understand that completely because there has been no other creature, and few humans, with whom I have shared the bond that I have with Claire. We literally know what the other is thinking.

So it was really important for me to try and capture the emotions that flow from my relationships with Claire and Mister Rogers in my

writing. I owe that to them. The same way I owe it to those other friends and family whose descriptions and personalities I have included in my novels.

A lot of readers write that they love Jimmy's family of misfits, especially Claire, and how much they felt, while reading, like they were included as participants in the family's celebrations, trials and tribulations. I got such an email yesterday from one of my dear reader friends, Stu Buchman, from Texas, who had just finished reading KMAG. Each time I read that kind of comment I weep.

Because these novels are my way of sharing all of the characters who have made my life so magical. And when I read those comments, I feel like I may have pulled that off. Mission accomplished.

So thanks for that feedback, Stu, and all of the other readers who have made the time to post their reviews and the effort to make that point. I am forever grateful.

Well, my fine, five readers, it is that wonderful one-seventh of our week that is truly magical - Friday.

So let's dream our way through the workday with our eyes on the weekend, with all of its positive potential.

But first, a quick kitty cuddle and my daily rounds. So I must flee.

And if you find yourselves with a few free hours, pick up a book, any book, and take that mind trip to wherever makes you feel magical.

But most of all, make today a great one!

Oh and two other things. Happy birthday to my brother, The Ginger.

May he experience all the magic life has to offer today, and every day. He is the most interesting April Fool's prank my family has ever put up with.

And finally, KMAG continues to remain in this new month a #1 New Release in Humorous Black Comedy.

4:32



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