

Nelson DeMille Is My Living Literary God

March 31, 2022

Okay, I'm just going to put it out there. The author Nelson DeMille has been the only modern day living writer that, once discovered, became binge worthy for me. I love the John Corey series of novels.

Anyway, last weekend, while I was waiting for the basement floors to dry during my monthly basement cleaning obligation, I decided to look up his agent and send off an email, just to see if I could get in contact with him. A complete shot in the dark. You never know how up to date or accurate the contact information on the internet can be concerning representation. Plus, as an attorney in the entertainment field, I know that agents are not prone to forwarding fan mail. This was a note in a bottle tossed into a very large ocean. The whole process reminded me of the time, as a child, my mother made me post a fan letter to John Wayne on her behalf.

So yesterday evening, as I was scanning my email to quickly delete the junk mail, I spotted the name *Nelson DeMille* in a header.

It was the man himself.

The meat of the email was a comical response to the things I had gushed about in my fan email - although it did refer to me as an "author" (cue sigh) - and it closed with these lines:

"Meanwhile, congratulations on "The Claire Trilogy." I love the titles. Good luck with your writing and thanks again for your very kind letter.

*All best,
Nelson DeMille"*

Now here's the thing, I never mentioned the titles of the three books in my email. Which means he had to have looked me up.

Nelson DeMille checked out my titles!

Plus, he typed - and therefore had to think about - the words *The Claire Trilogy*.

Dreams do come true.

Cue that milk truck, I'm ready to call it a life.

Side note, anyone who enjoyed *The Claire Trilogy* will absolutely love anything that Nelson DeMille puts into book form. So if you haven't read his work, I strongly recommend that you do so. And there is so much to choose from.

Anyway, I had a lot of computer storage issues this morning - that is why there is no photo - so it took me forever to get to this blog so I have to wrap this up and see a kitty about a cuddle.

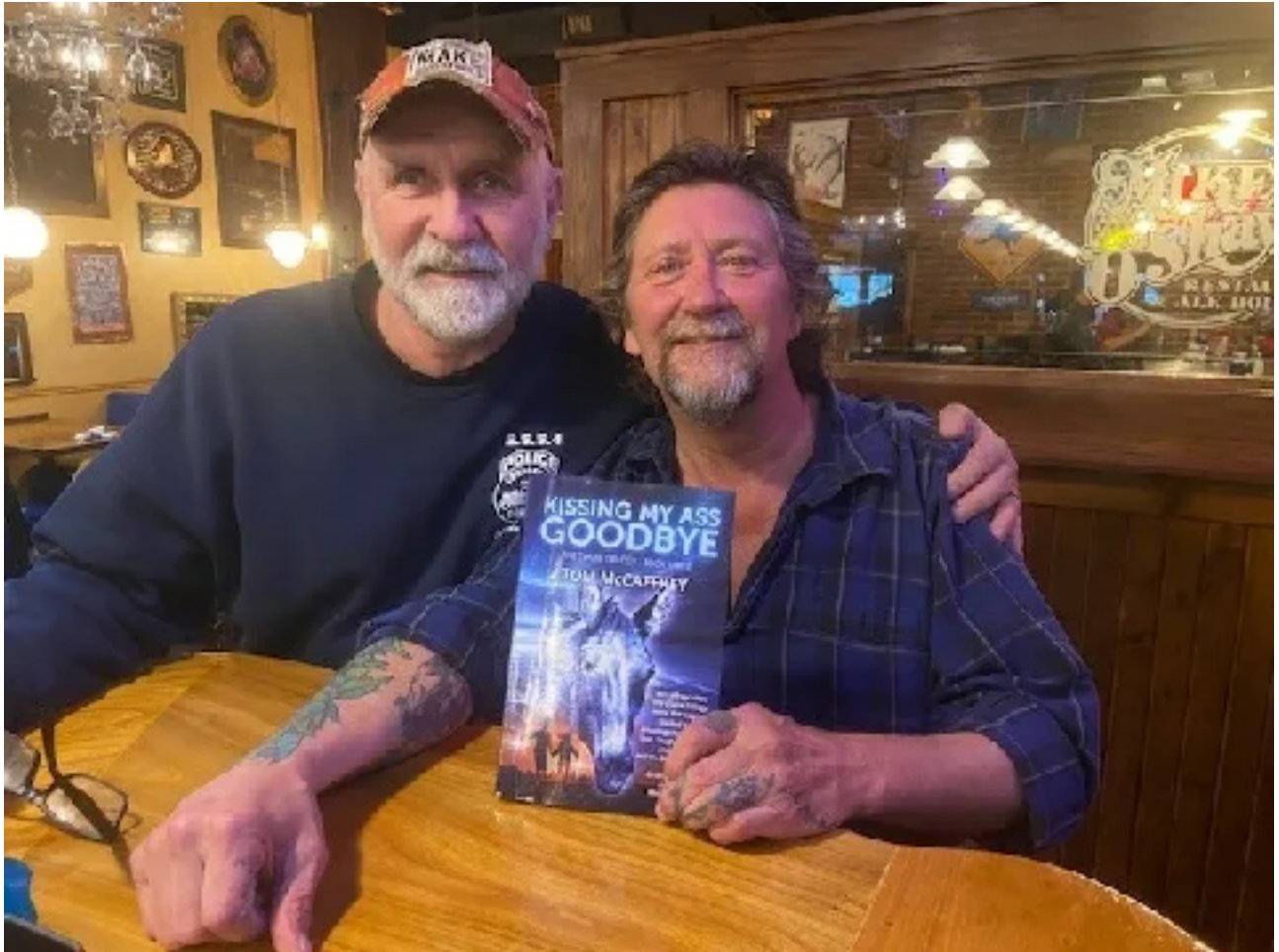
Plus there is a lot of recycling to drag out to the road.

But you fine, five readers go out there and enjoy your Thursday, knowing Friday is one more wake-up away.

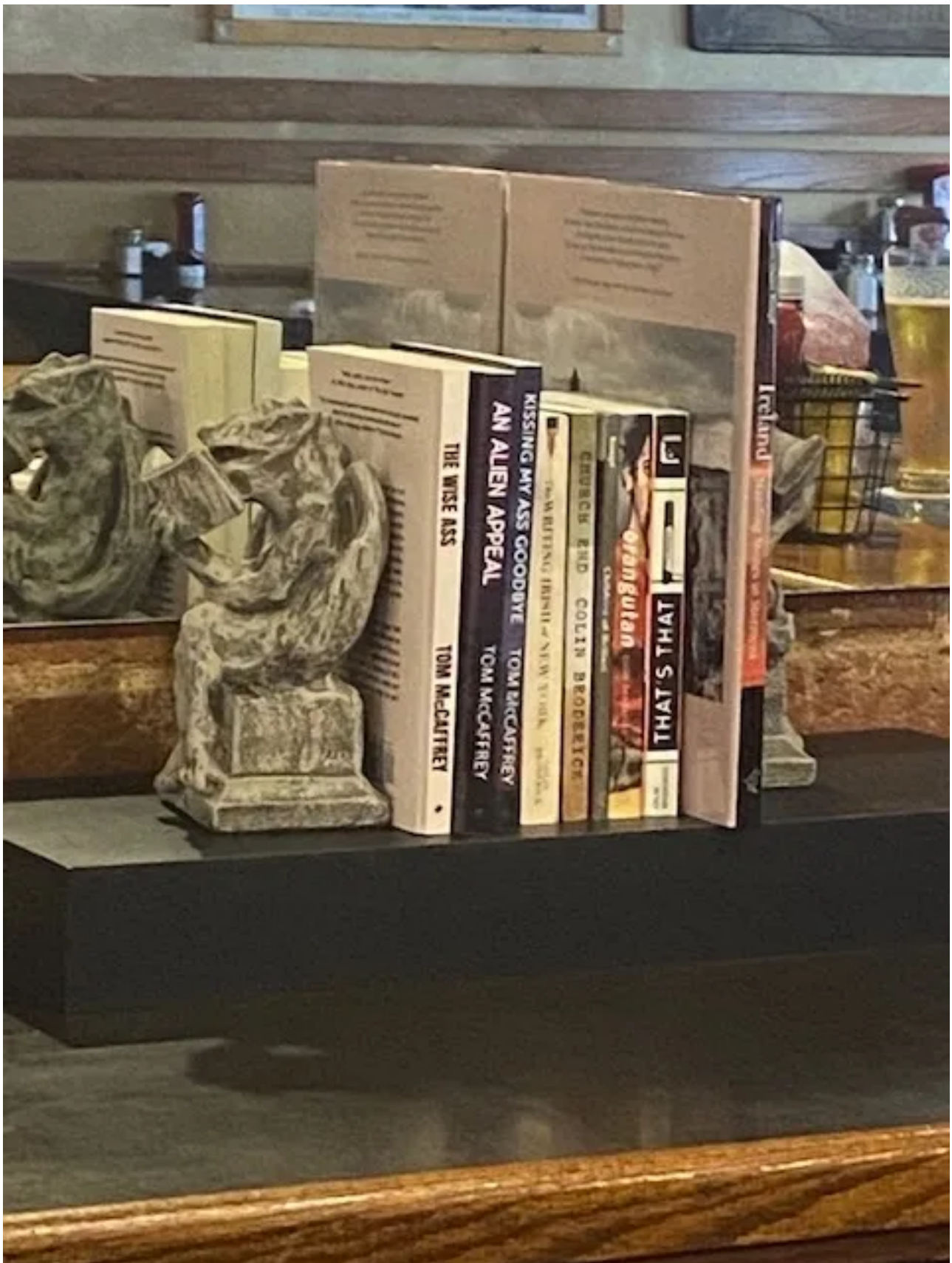
Make this day a great one. You never know what can happen for you.

Kyle - MOS' (And The World's) First McCaffrey Scholar

March 30, 2022



Yesterday, after the close of business, my paperback copies of KMAG arrived (thank you Justin @BRW). Since the Post Office was closed, Lisa suggested I drop off inscribed copies to Lonnie and Kyle at MOS. Now Kyle, in the above photo with me, earned my respect as a reader, when he borrowed the inscribed copies of TWA and AAA that appear on the MOS Writers Bookshelf,

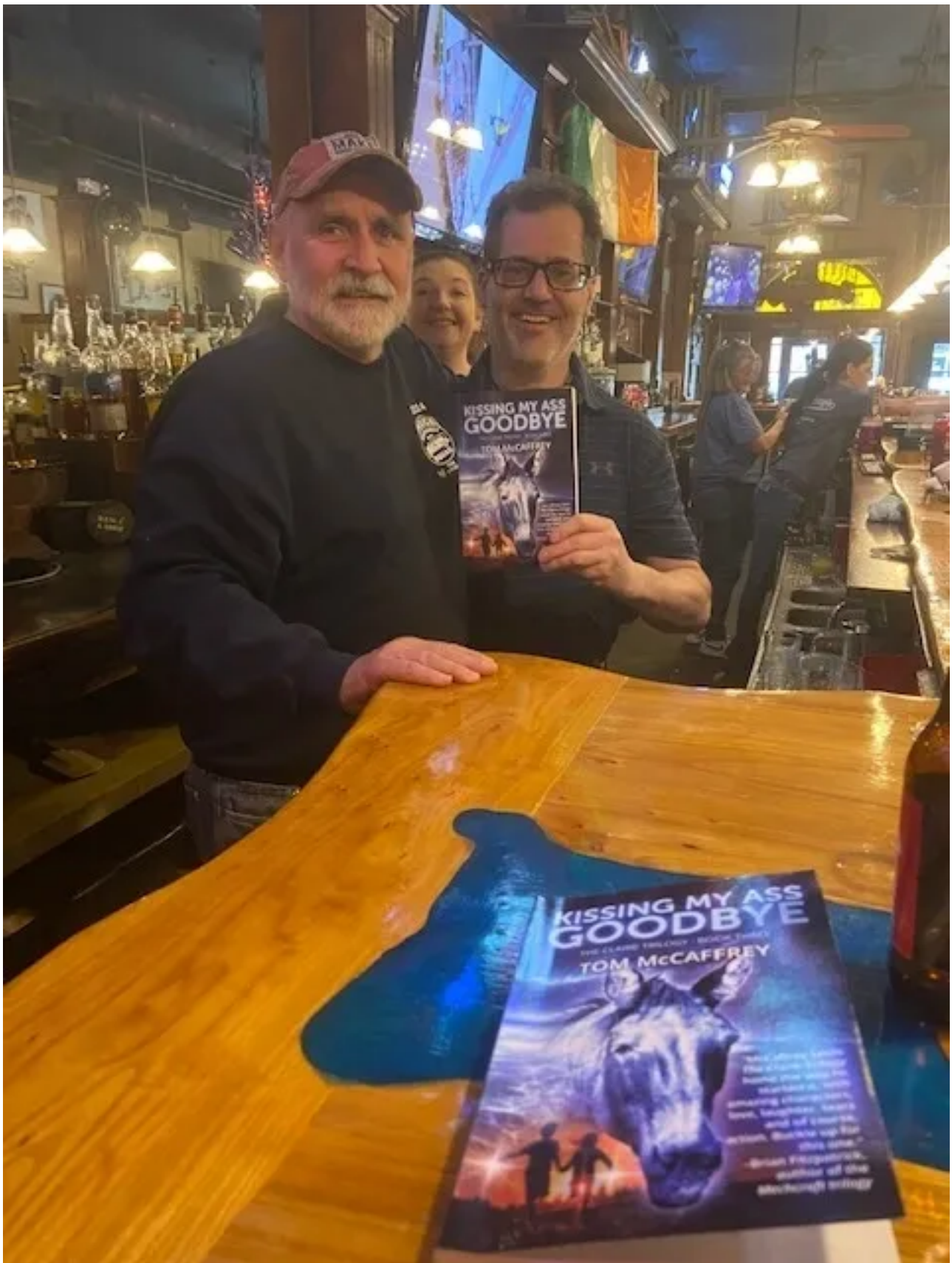


and then called me one Saturday morning to provide a detailed critique of the books. In all honesty he remembers the details of

both novels better than I do. During that same phone call, and in a couple of instances in person since then, I have provided Kyle with all notable backstories to *The Claire Trilogy*, just in case that Milk Truck gets me, so if anyone is interested in hearing the backstory, go to MOS and find Kyle. Have one of the bartenders pour you three fingers of Macallan Single Malt, then sit down and be entertained.

Anyway, when I delivered his inscribed copy of *KMAG* to Kyle, I dubbed him, hell I anointed him, the MOS' McCaffrey Scholar, after he again demonstrated an encyclopedic recollection of every detail in the first two novels with the eloquence of an English Honors Professor. Indeed, he had just completed reading *TWA* and *AAA* for a second time (He now has his own inscribed set, which I'm sure he'll show you if you ask nicely). Kyle also shared that his daughter (a mother to two of Kyle's wonderful grandchildren) has purchased her own copy of *TWA* and calls Kyle to discuss the advancement of the story at the close of every chapter her very busy life allows her to get through. I love that *The Claire Trilogy* has now gone multi-generational. Anyway, I am honored by Kyle's brand loyalty. For the record, Kyle has also become the resident scholar in all things Colin Broderick related, having voraciously consumed all of that Celtic Bard's books on the MOS Writer's Shelf (and listened to me confirm the events that appear there to the best of my knowledge). There is another British Author's Inscribed Book Arriving shortly from Liverpool that will be added to that collection, but I'll save that reveal for a future blog. (Let me at least direct you to his video podcast "Greenhills Chats" for now: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn25ESKqquyKEIpg7avydJA>).

By then Kyle will have consumed his book as well. I ask that any writer out there who would like their place on the MOS' Writer's Bookshelf to inscribe a copy to Lonnie Bell and mail it to Mike O'Shays @ 512 Main Street, Longmont Colorado 80501. Here's Lonnie accepting his inscribed copy of *KMAG* yesterday evening.



Why is it that I feel so at home behind an Irish bar?

Anyway, when I came home I began the delightful task of inscribing copies for all of the real people that appear as characters in *The Claire Trilogy*.



That is the first wave, as I am awaiting address confirmations from some of those characters. This batch will go out in the mail first thing this morning. I make it a point in my inscriptions to confirm that the recipient is in fact the corresponding character in the novel, in case they want to win a bet at some point in the future. It also allows me to trace any miscreant who attempts to hawk their copy on Ebay during my lifetime. Note to all - the value of any artist's work goes up posthumously, so hang tight. Note to BC - that is not an invitation for you to put the milk truck back on the road, assuming one of my readers doesn't find you first.

Anyway, it was wonderful to hold a physical copy of the last (?) of *The Claire Trilogy* novels in my hand and to know that it is finally out there for the world to enjoy.

I thank all of my fine, five readers for their support in my efforts.

Well, It's humpday, so let's get over it.

I have to see a kitty about a cuddle and then start my real life again.

The rest of you fine, five readers, go out there and seize the day.

But make it a great one!

Oh, and KMAG remainsl the top New Release in Humorous Black Comedy:

4:15



www.amazon.com



ESPAÑOL

ENGLISH



amazon
prime

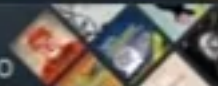
Tom



Find Amazon

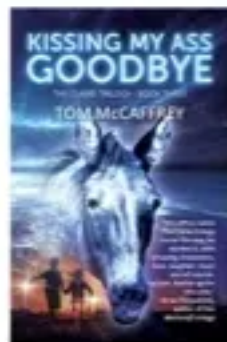


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Tom McCaffrey

Kissing My Ass Goodbye (The
Claire Trilogy Book 3)

★★★★☆ (82)

Book 3 of 3: The Claire Trilogy

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Humor Helps Us Cope

March 29, 2022

2:42



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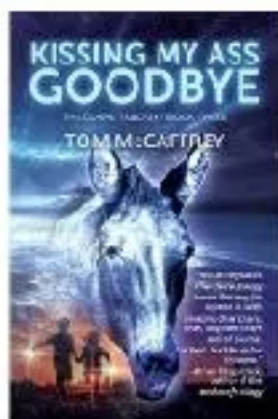
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Tom McCaffrey

**Kissing My Ass Goodbye (The
Claire Trilogy Book 3)**

★★★★★ (61)

Book 3 of 3: The Claire Trilogy

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Three days in with KMAG as the #1 New Release in Humorous Black Comedy leaves me speechless. Anyone who has followed these blogs will remember that with the first two books, TWA and AAA, this kind of success, is measured hourly. So each morning as I open the Amazon page for KMAG, I never know what to expect.

And while often repeatable, as with the ebb and flow of life, it is also fleeting, so one needs to take victory laps when they can, as often they come. After all, in business (and publishing is a business), as in life, there is no guaranty of tomorrow.

I'd be lying if I did not admit that it is also a wee bit surprising, given that, as the readers are beginning to find out, there is a lot more action in this final (?) part of The Claire Trilogy, and serious issues are addressed. The family of misfits has hung together through the worst of the worst.

However, the trilogy's characters all have remained true to their personalities, and, as they say, even during times of great adversity and stress, a Wise Ass is a Wise Ass is a Wise Ass.

Sometimes, as in real life, you just need that subtle chuckle to break the tension so you can withstand the horrors. Humor is the universal coping mechanism.

And unfortunately, these are dark times and there is real horror in our world. We all need that coping mechanism.

So reading becomes a low cost therapy. It is where we, as civilized humans, go to escape, if only for a few minutes at a time. We catch our breath and center our minds in the world of fiction so that, recharged, we may face the real world.

I have seen a lot of reviews for the different books in The Claire Trilogy that discuss how the story has allowed that reader to escape. Some have volunteered that the trilogy has become their new coping mechanism. I am touched by that thought.

And a good story should always offer the reader hope. The worst can be overcome. Love does conquer evil.

So, during these difficult times, keep that go-to book handy, and when you have a few moments, disappear into its pages and catch your breath. It's like stepping through an interdimensional portal.

Then come back to reality and continue to fight the good fight, even

if that is only putting food on your table and keeping a roof over your head. This too shall pass.

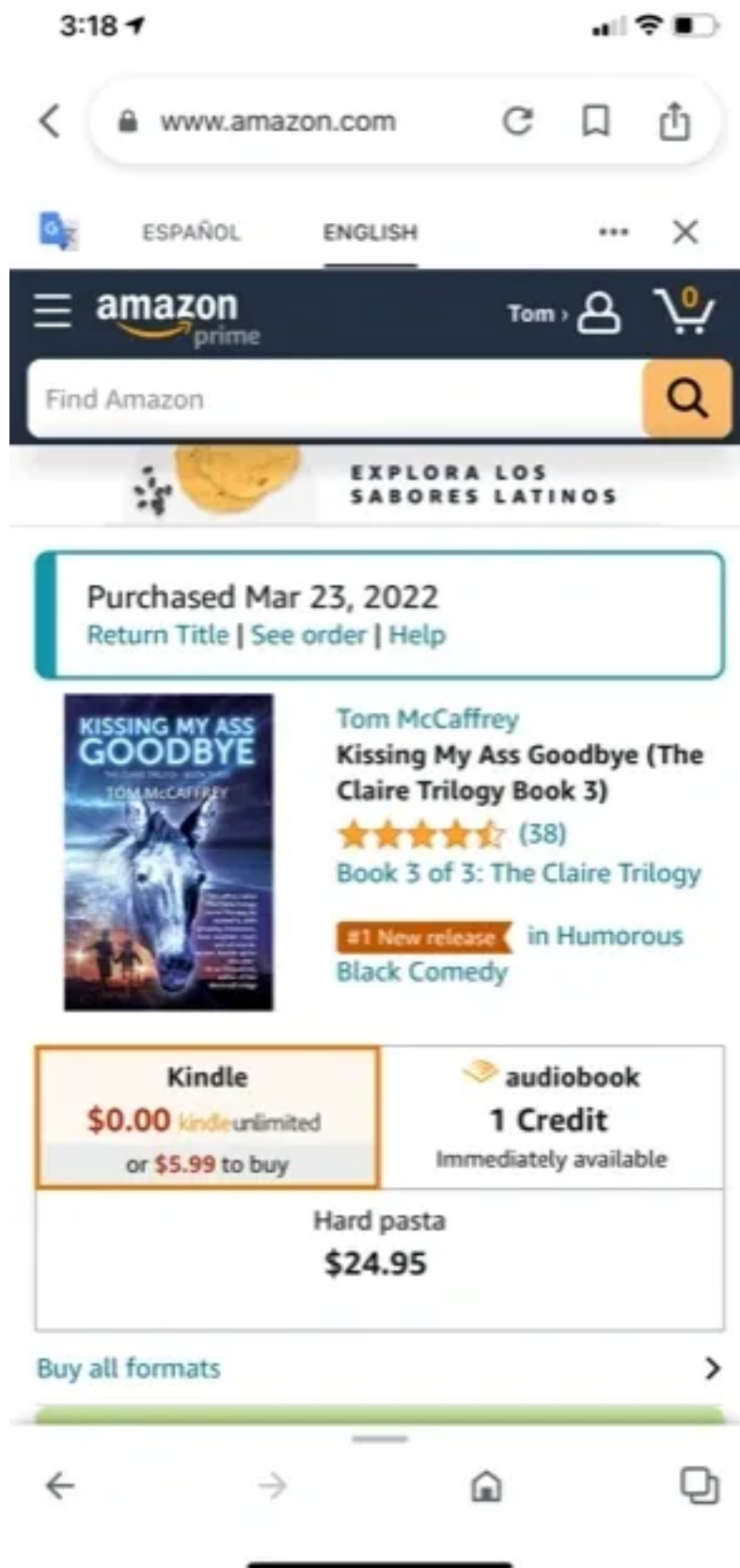
So, I apologize to my fine, five readers if today's blog seems a little darker than usual. But Thomas Fuller (*A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine and the Confines Thereof*) was right, dawn approaches, so hope springs eternal. We can get through anything with the right people around you. Find your family of misfits and hang on for dear life. And focus your individual and collective intentions on making this day a great one.

Smokey awaits, and a purring kitty is also wonderful therapy.



Tejanogrande - "The Best Of Good Things"

March 28, 2022



With *KMAG* crossing forty-eight hours as a #1 New Release, I cannot be more thankful for those readers who have demonstrated

brand loyalty to Claire and her gang of misfits, followed my literary journey along from the beginning, and read each work and then posted reviews for all three books. There have been a number of you and I am so grateful for each one of you.

Just like the reader has gotten to know my characters, I am able to discern bits about the reader themselves by what they write in their reviews. I feel like I have gotten to know many of you. And as many of my fine, five readers have learned, I do enjoy the personal contacts I have received through email at this website and respond to all that reach out. Thank you all for taking the time and making the effort. I know how busy you all are and I am blessed that you have carved a little time out of those lives to read my work. It is greatly appreciated. You've changed my life. You rock!

Since I cannot comment on Amazon personally, let me express that same gratitude here with a collective and heartfelt ***Thank You So Much*** for buying and reading my novels and taking the time and making the effort to post your reviews.

One reader in particular, ***Tejanogrande ("Large Texan")***, has especially touched my heart, because he is in my particular demographic, whose members are often reticent about their personal lives, and yet he so openly was willing to share about how *The Claire Trilogy* affected his own life in front of the vast ocean of Amazon reviewers. Now it is true that there is safety in numbers and it is easy to get lost in a crowd, but I noticed. As I have said many time, I read them all.

TWA

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars Fantastic

Reviewed in the United States on June 7, 2021

Verified Purchase

Loved every part of this book from beginning to end. Eagerly awaiting the next in the series. Please please hurry.

AAA

Top positive review

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars **what can I say?**

Reviewed in the United States on December 25, 2021

I waited for this sequel for months. Read the first again the day before it came out. Then read this one in one sitting. Now I wait on the third in the trilogy as impatient as I did for the second. I know all things come to an end, but I honestly dread the ending to this story. In my seventy years, 65 at least spent reading hundreds if not thousands of books, this has to be a story I have enjoyed way more than most.

7 people found this helpful

KMAG

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars **It is with great sadness.....**

Reviewed in the United States on March 27, 2022

Verified Purchase

I suppose it is true that all good things must come to an end. This trilogy has been the best of good things. I am amazed that as a 70 year old man I have shed many a tear and laughs while reading this series. I often felt like I was a part of this family of misfits and will remember all of them like the memories I have of my own family members who have passed over before me. Thank you very much Mr. McCaffrey for an amazing journey.

Thank you, **Tejanogrande** (and the others), for allowing Claire and her merry band of misfits into your life. I feel that you, and other readers/reviewers who have responded in kind, who have expressed how they enjoyed feeling included in the experience, and voiced how they would love to come to Berthoud and sit around that large farmer's table with the characters, especially Claire, drinking, laughing, fighting, loving, or just shooting the shit, are part of the story. Claire's story. My story. My family. You are all sitting in the room with me, along with the characters, as I type those books and these blogs. You are with me now. I think of you all as I touch these keys. Just like the real entities upon whom all of the characters are based, you have made a profound difference in my life. You are all "the best of good things." I have been truly blessed.

So on that note, I have to set aside this little bit of heaven and return to my reality. Smokey awaits.

But you fine, five readers have made this Monday so much more bearable, and I thank you for that.

Have a great day!

Fiction and Politics

March 27, 2022

KMAG received a three star review yesterday with the headline **"Fiction is not a political lectern"**

It started out by referring to *KMAG* as a "great book" but then lambasted me as the writer for what the critic thought were its/my personal political view points on the pandemic. I surmise that the review was written by someone in or from another country, as it made references to "your country" and "your government."

Personally, I make it a point not to share my political or religious views with the creative world. And I do not judge writers by their politics or their religious beliefs. I do not want to judge or be judged by preconceived biases. I just want to tell a modern day fantasy story.

KMAG was written and is set during the COVID Pandemic. As a writer, I made use of the pandemic as a literary device to help isolate and insulate Jimmy and his family of misfits from the world. I also used it to frame Jimmy Moran's growing disillusion with the world around him, so that when he makes certain decisions in the story, they are in keeping with that advancing disillusion. COVID is seen through the eyes of a character that is now impervious to any human malady and who judges the actions of the government and human populace around him through that lens. This disillusion brings Jimmy back towards his mafia roots. Indeed, Jimmy Moran's perception of the government sets the stage for the final showdown at the end of the book. From the beginning of The Claire Trilogy through its conclusion, Jimmy Moran remains a flawed character.

KMAG is a work of fiction.

But as with any criticism, I wanted to be fair, while the lawyer in me wanted to see if the critic's observation held up to analytical scrutiny.

Does politics have any place in literature?

You be the judge:

"The importance of politics to Shakespeare is evident simply in his choice of subjects for his plays. His ten history plays concentrate on political matters. Dealing as they do with a variety of English kings, they raise a whole series of political issues—war vs. peace, the role

of religion in politics, legitimate vs. illegitimate princes—ultimately centering on the questions: what does it take to be a good king and where do the majority of kings go wrong?"

***Great Thinkers Shakespeare and Politics*, <https://thegreatthinkers.org/shakespeare-and-politics/introduction/>**

"Written during the First World War and the struggle for Irish independence, *Ulysses*, while set prior to these events, was shaped by, and was a reaction to them. That one day in 1904 Dublin is not a static world, preserved in aspic, but one shaped by the social, political and economic events that provided the context for future cataclysmic transformations. Political and philosophical concerns, dilemmas and contradictions run like a thread through the novel despite its allusive and symbolist form and techniques – it was a revolutionary attempt to develop forms of literary expression capable of explaining and interpreting the modern world, not by rejecting all that went before but through preserving what was progressive and liberating, while exposing and rejecting what was oppressive and repressive."

***John McNally, Ulysses at 100. The Politics of James Joyce* <https://www.counterfire.org/articles/opinion/22939-ulysses-at-100-the-politics-of-james-joyce>**

"In his imaginative writing of this first major period of his career, political issues appear more often than has generally been noticed or acknowledge though they seldom become a major theme. In "Out of Season," one three stories in Hemingway's first published book (1923), the drunk gardener-fishing guide Peduzzi extends greetings as he walks through to, with his clients. Silently and rather sinisterly, "the bank clerk stared at from the door of the Fascist cafe." Of the ten poems in the same book, "Roosevelt" is an ambivalent eulogy to a childhood hero, and "Captives," "Champs d'Honneur," and "Riparto D'Assalto" express the disillusionment with the Great War that was the most widely held political opinion among literary intellectuals at the time and that was to receive its definitive statement six years later in *A Farewell to Arms*. Similar sentiments are behind a third of the eighteen short sketches called "chapters" comprising *in our time* (1924) and appearing again in *In*

Our Time (1925). In addition, the 1930 edition of that collection contains "On the Quai at Smyrna," derived from Hemingway's journalistic coverage of the Greco-Turkish conflict, and the overtly political story "The Revolutionist," which had appeared as a "chapter" of *in our time*. A few months later the short satirical novel *The Torrents of Spring* was published with a sarcastic dedication to S. Stanwood Mencken, a right-winger committed to keeping alive the red scare with the preposterous claim that there were more than half a million Communists in the United States, and to his antagonist H. L. Mencken. In the next novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, the banter of Jake Barnes and Bill Gorton on their fishing trip north of Pamplona includes references to both foreign and domestic politics: Primo de Rivera and the rebellion in the Rif as well as Lincoln and Grant, the temperance movement, William Jennings Bryan, and President Coolidge. Coolidge is also mentioned in "Banal Story" in *Men without Women* (1927), a collection that includes two Italian stories of political significance. "In Another Country" is set in Milan at a rehabilitation hospital for wounded military personnel during the war. Walking through "the communist quarter" to the Cafe Cova, the narrator and three other young officers must pass by wineshops filled with hostile workers, some shouting, "A basso gli ufficiali!" ("Down with officers!") Much more unpleasant is the political situation after the war as depicted in "Che Ti Dice la Patria?" This story first appeared as a non-fictional report on a trip Hemingway and Guy Hickok took to Italy in March 1927. The country that Hemingway had loved so much only a decade earlier had become under Mussolini a rude, threatening, dangerous, corrupt place. That is what the country's domination by fascism said to him. Finally, at the end of the decade, came *A Farewell to Arms*. Whatever else that great novel may say, its statement against the Great War is clear and convincing."

Hemingway and Politics

<https://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/10/09/hemingway%E2%80%99s-and-politics/>

"First published in 1947, Camus's novel is the fictional chronicle of a plague that strikes the French Algerian city of Oran sometime in the 1940s. It has often been interpreted as a symbolic rendering of the

German occupation of France and the gaping wounds left in French society. While Camus's experiences during the occupation and as a member of the Resistance undoubtedly influenced *The Plague*, to construe its narrative as a simple allegory would unjustly limit the breadth and depth of its social critique. It is telling that Camus chose to set the novel, not in a totalitarian state, but in the liberal-democratic yet still deeply unequal and segregated environment of French Colonial Algeria. The plague which devours Oran is less a proxy for a manifestly odious occupying force than it is emblematic of the contradictions inherent in democracy, in which the limits of liberal universalism and equality collide against the violent reality of state power."

Duncan Riley, Reinterpreting Albert Camus's The Plague How the novel by the Nobel Prize Winning French-Algerian author speaks to our present moment.

<https://commonreader.wustl.edu/c/reinterpreting-albert-camus-the-plague/>

[#:~:text=The%20existence%20of%20political%20authority%20must%2C%20ultimately%2C%20lead,but%20its%20seditious%20quality%20has%20generally%20passed%20unnoticed.](#)

"War and Peace was conceived in politics, and although Tolstoy deviated from his initial plan it is steeped in politics. It begins with the shallow political gossip of courtiers gathered at a Saint Petersburg salon in 1805, and ends by looking ahead to the politics in which it originated: hovering over the dreams and thoughts of that forward-looking fourteen-year-old is the abortive Decembrist uprising of 1825, which ushered in the thirty-year reign of the reactionary tsar Nicholas I. "

Paul Romney, 'Great Chords': Politics and Romance in Tolstoy's War and Peace https://www.academia.edu/7769828/Great_Chords_Politics_and_Romance_in_Tolstoy's_War_and_Peace

And finally, more recently, let us not forget:

"*The Handmaid's Tale*, based on [Margaret Atwood's](#) novel of the same name, is a militarized dystopia named Gilead (loosely based in the United States) experiencing a sharp fertility decline due to

environmental toxicity, sequestering fertile women as handmaids where they are selected to procreate for wealthy families. The series is loosely based on real historical (and current) incidents where women's rights have been jeopardized by the state. Under the totalitarian government of Gilead, women are expected to perform their roles as either handmaids, wives, marthas, or aunts; all of which are reduced to specific functions that, if undermined, can result in torture, imprisonment, and death sentences. Women are unable to work, own property, and are denied access to higher education. Offred ([Elisabeth Moss](#))—a woman who once lived as June, a mother and independent American—is the main protagonist, providing expository and internal commentary through voice-overs that help describe the creation of Gilead, the community of the handmaids, and her boiling revulsion for her authority figures. As the series progresses, Offred begins to slowly communicate with other handmaids, realizing the power of their community: like any society, when the middle ground revolts, the entire system can potentially collapse."

Shaun Harris, SATURDAY FILM SCHOOL 'The Handmaid's Tale' is Sadly Familiar

<https://www.popdust.com/pt-hulus-handmaids-tale-review-2510499439.html#:~:text=Although%20extreme%2C%20The%20Handmaid%27s%20Tale%20is%20a%20socio-political,gender%20inequality%2C%20and%20the%20horrors%20of%20systematic%20oppression.>

"The defense rests."

Now I have read, interpreted and judged all of the above writers based solely on their narrative skills and my engagement with the stories they tell.

That's all I ask of the reader when they pick up one of my novels. Remember, they are fiction. And while Claire is quite real, I am not Jimmy Moran.

So the rest of you fine, five readers, enjoy your day of rest. And have a great day.

Thank You Readers

March 26, 2022

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Tom McCaffrey
Kissing My Ass Goodbye (The Claire Trilogy Book 3)
★★★★☆ (10)
Book 3 of 3: The Claire Trilogy
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Woke up this morning to find that KMAG had joined her sisters as a "#1 New Release in Humorous Black Comedy." I credit that satisfying result to brand loyalty. My readers love Claire. And that is completely understandable. I'm not kidding myself. Claire has been lightning in a bottle from the moment I met her. She is magical.

And the most wondrous thing about it all, is that Claire couldn't give a shit. It was like, "C'mon Tommy, I gave you your story, now back to business. Claire wants her carrots!" There is no rest for the wicked!



So despite the fact that I was knee deep in legal alligators, I had to get up from my computer and attend to big-little missy. There is no palatable alternative.

So I went out and broke up a five pound bag of carrots and left them on the table - otherwise she insists I feed her one at a time at the door - and left Claire to munch on her buffet at the table.



I took the moment to run to the barn to replace a box cutter that had somehow gone missing - probably out there beneath the layers of floor hay with my gold wedding band - without the box-cutter I cannot pop the hay bales to rack or bag them (I replaced the wedding band with a cool black rubber one which won't send me into a tizzie if I lose it working around the property.) When I returned to the back door, Claire was already back in her extortionist position - she was so focused on her treats that she hadn't noticed me sneaking off.



But I did take a moment to update her on how the new release was doing and how we were still awaiting our delivery of the paperback copies of KMAG.



That's my serious face used only for the delivery of serious news. Claire didn't seem as upset as I was, given her "Yada, yada, yada. . . more carrots!" response.

So you see, no matter what successes one may have in life, like the #1 spot above, they are fleeting.

You must not get distracted by them. They do not change who you are. What really matters is taking care of your daily business - making sure that the needs of those around you that supported you on your journey are met as they are needed. You owe them that. Luckily I have Claire to keep me in check.

So I gave Claire her second helping of carrots and tossed about a half dozen thin carrots to Honey who remained sunbathing by the workshop, then returned to my office and my life as a lawyer.

But today is Saturday, so my Gentleman Farmer chores await, hay bales and water troughs and mule muffins. Claire will need her brushing. All is right with the world.

But I wanted to thank the readers who came back to read KMAG.

That may just be a small part of my life, but it is important to me.

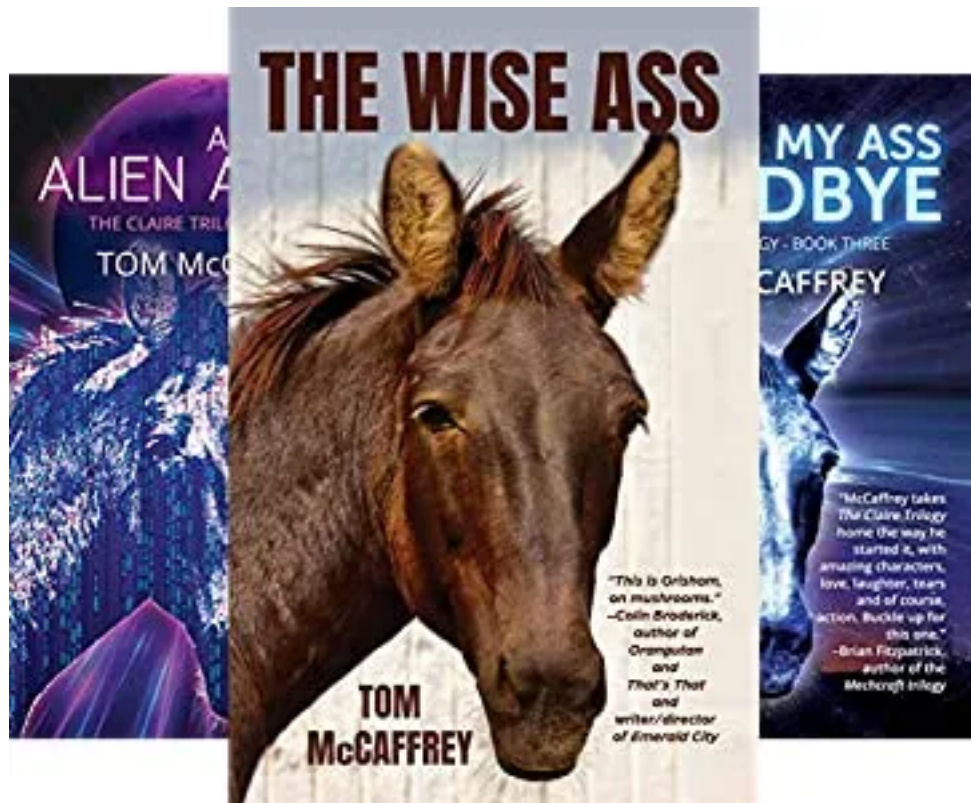
And I greatly appreciate each one of you for getting me here.

So you fine, five readers go out and enjoy your Saturday. I know I will.

And most of all, have a great day!

Opening Night For The Claire Trilogy - Now Complete!

March 25, 2022



For some reason, K MAG wasn't posted on the Amazon Dark Humor list with its sisters, and the publisher is looking into it, but it had a healthy first opening day at #15 on Legal Thrillers (Books) and #33 Legal Thrillers (Kindle) so its right up there with Grisham, Pratt, Dugon, James, Methos and Ellsworth. And the reviews have been predominantly positive so far, which is what really counts to me. I want my readers satisfied. For example the one four star review from a Kindle Customer in Milwaukee, WI USA , was incredibly complimentary:

From the United States



Kindle Customer **4.0 out of 5 stars Four stars**

Reviewed in the United States on March 25, 2022

Verified Purchase

It's fiction. It's fantasy. But a great set of books from an author with a top notch imagination that pulls it all together for an awesome read with his genius ability to do so. Loved all the characters and being able to "get in their heads" ...very cool series and I highly recommend.

Of course, after reading it I had to double check to make sure my mother was really dead and not just living under an alias in Wisconsin (Mom would have only given me 4 stars because, in her Irishness, she never wanted any of us to get above ourselves).

The three five star reviews that came in overnight allowed me to take a deep breath and know that the readers of the first two books had enjoyed the third:



Tortuga

5.0 out of 5 stars **Fun read**

Reviewed in the United States on March 25, 2022

Excellent imagination and sense of humor. Thanks for sharing this bingeable trilogy.

Helpful [Report abuse](#)



Addy Heffernan

5.0 out of 5 stars **loved it!**

Reviewed in the United States on March 24, 2022 **Verified**

Purchase

Hard to read through the tears but I managed. Just chock full of wonder and magic. If only. Hoping to read about the continuing adventures of Stella and Apollo.

Helpful [Report abuse](#)



Kindle Customer

5.0 out of 5 stars I snickered, I laughed, cried

Reviewed in the United States on March 25, 2022 Verified

Purchase

One of the best series ever! This was my first time reading this author and now I am looking for more.

Helpful Report abuse

The OFC did their very best to keep me distracted by sharing their Voldemort watch, beginning with BC himself chiming in first thing yesterday morning after reading yesterday's blog:

"10 min. before you release the coyotes, eh? I suspected as much! Things didn't work out between me and Bruin-hilda. So I faked my own death in the Amish community, left our car behind in GA, and I'm on the move again. Vaya con dios! "



Joe and Lenny were on fire with comical comments I cannot repeat in this blog, but literally had me tearing up with laughter.



I could barely catch my breath. I had to turn the phone off in order to properly attend to the legal work that needed my attention. Can you imagine what constant doses of this kind of collective mindset did to me throughout my formative years? I am forever warped.

And I would not have it any other way. Cannot wait to get some of it down in The Riverdale Chronicles.

And I had a wonderful conversation with my sister (Veronica, never Ronni) - the basis for Bonnie in TCT - who called to wish me luck.

As did my older brother Eddie, who is everything I say he is in TCT.

My other family members shared their congratulations through texts - which made it easier given the different time-zones. Eileen Collins (One of the new characters in KMAG), reached out as well.

Thanks Eileen. Also, the Amazing Bobbi Allison reached out to throw some of her magic behind the launch - check her out on the

Internet: <https://www.bobbiallison.com>. I believe she now resides in Florida, so look her up and book a reading.

My dear friend and brilliant author/auteur Colin Broderick gave me "a bell" to wish me opening day luck and share some absolutely amazing personal stories that made me feel like I was getting the latest update from Writer's Heaven. I want to be Colin in my next life. The brilliant writers, Margaret Reyes Dempsy, Richard Lamb and Christine Cooper-Burnett, all reached out via text with warm wishes. I have to mention that the Writers Group on Twitter are the most supportive people you can find on the planet, and thank them collectively for their kindnesses, yesterday and everyday.

And my DIL, Georgina (né Moss - whose parents are the Aussies in TWA), who inserted her beautiful and tall Aussie Model DNA into my branch of the gene pool through her marriage to my son Luke - whose own novel - *Lebanon Red* - debuts this August (up for pre-sale on the BRW website - he shames me when it comes to pure writing talent) - resulting in the subsequent births of Scarlett, Savanna and Stella (who, with my grandson, Lucian, via Jackie, are all characters in TCT - and any sequels that are written) posted this wonderful shout-out on Instagram (which I have not yet mastered):



2 minutes ago



You should check out Georgie's on-line presense - and her talented representation of a wonderful line of holistic cosmetics at "mindfulmamamodel" on Instagram.

Oh and I got to send out inscribed copies of *TWA* to ten winners of the Goodreads Give away, which is always exciting.

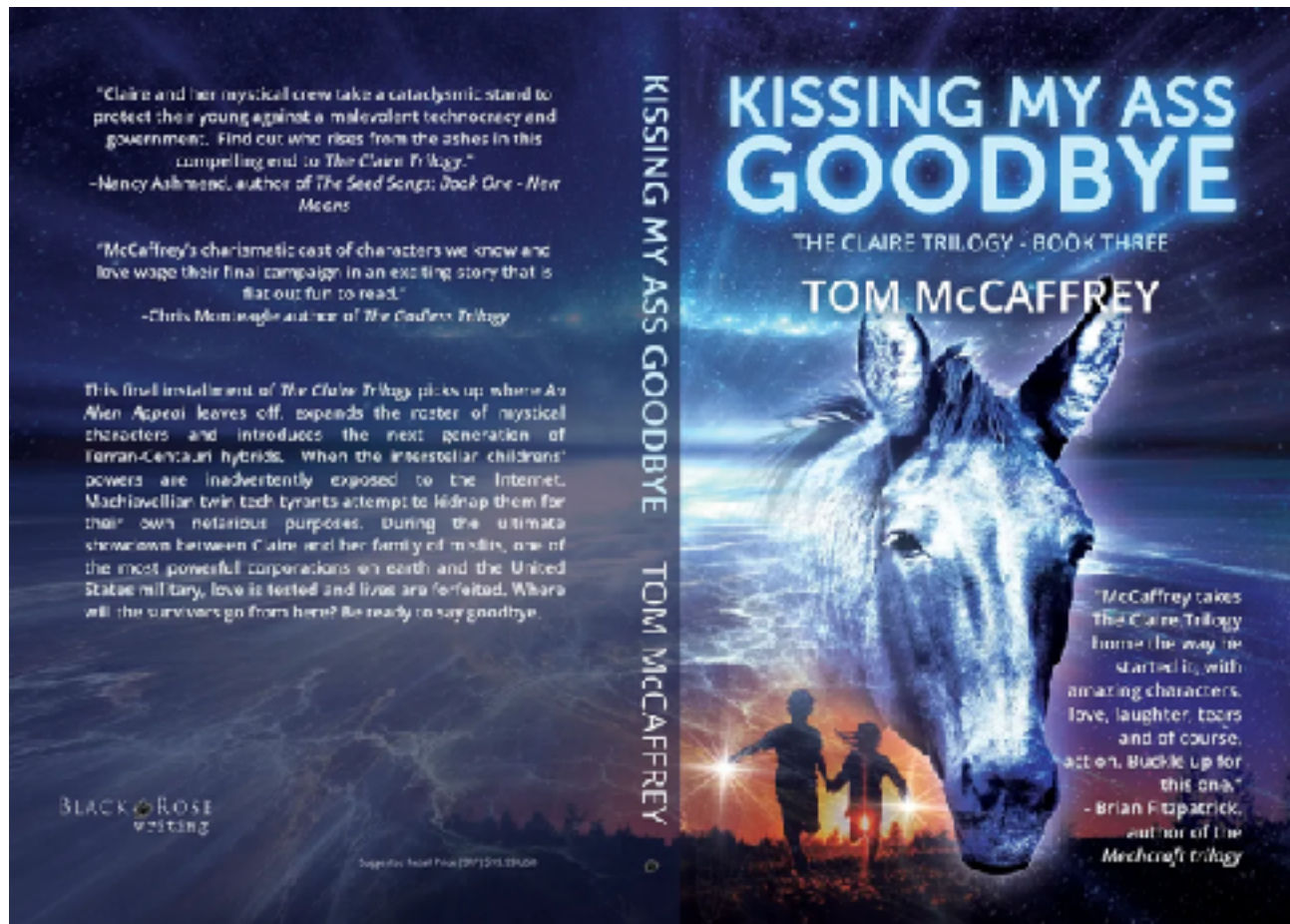
Anyway, yesterday was as good as it gets for this old dog, and I cannot thank all of you mentioned above and those reading these words for all of the support. I would not have made it this far without all of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. . .

So you fine, five readers go out an embrace Friday and all of its potential for happiness and adventure.

But most of all, have a great day.

Happy Birth Day KMAG - Thank You Reagan Rothe

March 24, 2022



Well, this is it. *The Claire Trilogy* as a separate unit is complete and available to one and all who are interested. I just hope I have at least kept everyone who has picked up *TWA* and *AAA* interested. I pray that you are all as satisfied by the end (?) of the journey as the first couple of reviewers on Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/60035362-kissing-my-ass-goodbye#other_reviews

For those of you that are interested, for some strange reason Amazon cannot seem to keep all four versions of KMAG on one page. The paperback can be found here:

https://www.amazon.com/Kissing-Ass-Goodbye-Claire-Trilogy/dp/1684339057/ref=sr_1_1?crid=V0EHR5KCH4PK&keywords=kissing+my+ass+goodbye&qid=1648117021&s=digital-text&sprefix=%2Cdigital-text%2C89&sr=1-1-catcorr

While the Kindle, Hardcover and Audible are found here:

https://www.amazon.com/Kissing-Goodbye-Claire-Trilogy-Book-ebook/dp/B09NDV7Y9B/ref=sr_1_1?crid=265CVSTT0VYG7&keywords=Kissing+My+Ass+Goodbye&qid=1647958076&s=digital-text&sprefix=kissing+my+ass+goodbye%2Cdigital-text%2C178&sr=1-1

Now I enjoy the convenience of a Kindle read as much as the next person. I mean, you find yourself with a purported few minutes free while you are waiting in the car for someone to rush into a store on the way home for just a few quick items, so you grab that cell phone and, a half-hour later, you have burned through 30 pages of that novel you have been wanting to finish just in time to pop that tailgate and unload a full trolley of whatever into the SUV.

And I understand the value of an audible versions for those with vision issues, or long commutes who prefer the throwback feel of the oral tradition that an audible book provides (and I thank the wonderful narrators for bringing those words to life).

However, during those dedicated times when you have stolen away from your daily reality with the resolute purpose of doing nothing else but immersing yourself in a book, then I like the paperback to be in my hands. I like the paperback because it is malleable and you can prop it open with one hand while you contort yourself into a thousand different positions to reflect the comfort, humor or anxiety that you are feeling as you take that literary trip with the author. It also leaves that other hand free to hold your coffee (or The Macallan) as you follow along, and I find that the moisture from the containers of both hot and cold beverages helps keep my fingertips moist for page turning purposes.

Speaking of fingertips, back in the late 80s or early 90s, Rick London, a one-time member of Billy Joel's management team, once told me that dry fingertips when you turn a page is a sign of aging.

(He also told me that the man with the best stories at the end of his

life wins - and I thank him for both those nuggets of wisdom). I never forget the important things, even if it's someone else's minutia. Hey Rick! Hope you got that winning life.

Paperback and hardcovers are also good if, like me, you like to get those books inscribed by the author. And here's a promise, if anyone ever sees me out in public, anywhere, or happens to be passing Casa Claire and spots me wandering the property, or outside talking with Claire, and you have copies of any or all of my books with you, and want them inscribed, just stop me and ask.

Don't be shy. But have a pen handy, just in case I don't have one. My feeling is that I owe my readers the same kind of loyalty that they have continued to show me by buying and reading my work. I don't exist in this realm without each and every one of you.

To tell you the truth, I really thought I'd be more nervous this morning. But I feel at peace. I really feel I left the best version of *The Claire Trilogy* that constantly played through my head on these pages, warts and all, and I really want nothing more than for my readers to enjoy their time in my literary world. Time is so precious.

To my fine, five readers, I hope that at some point over the next few days that you either start, complete, or both, The Claire Trilogy. I have been honored and touched by your support. Thanks for providing me this opportunity. And even if Claire's story isn't the genre you like or are comfortable with, then pick up some other authors' books, preferably a new author, and give them a chance. Everyone needs that first break. Time well spent reading can never be wasted. And your patronage may not only change your own life, it definitely will change the life of the writer. So its a win-win.

Well, I have a Kitty to cuddle and rounds to make, then back to the legal mines (Hollywood, where are you?).

Now BC, I'm giving you a ten minute head start before I release the coyotes. Make the best of them. Joe, keep that head covered.

Stein, phone home. Beau & Victor, the perfect twins. Lenny, thanks for always being there. Helen, BFF. Bobbi, frighteningly gifted.

Whitey, I know you've got my 6. Eileen, welcome to the team. Lisa, thanks for loaning me Gina, love you both. Dan, forever respect. Ev & Michelle, truly otherworldly. To the rest of my characters, especially my grandchildren, Scarlett, Savanna, Stella and Lucian, I

love you all, thanks for appearing in my life and my mind, we've had a lot of fun.

Come along Claire, here's a carrot, you have more stories to dictate. . . . tell Honey to hold your calls.

All of the rest of you out there, have a great day.

PS. Thank you Reagan Rothe and all of the other members of the BRW team for seeing the value in *The Claire Trilogy*. More to come.

BC's Final Countdown

March 23, 2022



The above photo was sent to the OFC by the real BC, along with the text: "Sure, it's all fun and games joking with you guys about my future (or lack thereof) after KMAG drops. But after Zoltar croaked

out 'You're fucked!' to me today, that has me wondering if I may have a few dark days ahead."

I am laughing as I type this. This is that completely dry sense of humor that BC has mastered over the last 5 decades. He has been making me laugh for a very long time. (Is it me or does BC not resemble a young "Cigarette Smoking Man" from the X-Files) BC and his long suffering wife, the lovely Nan, are on "vacation" which is just the cover BC has presented to the world in his effort to keep moving for fear of remaining too long in one area before being recognised. Well, we cannot give him the upper hand and so I am spreading this photo as far and wide as possible.

I met BC in highschool. He lived up right over the City line in Yonkers, in a beautiful area at the crest of a hill in a beautiful home. But he didn't migrate down to our neighborhood, Riverdale, until he accompanied Jack Vaughan, another dear Riverdale friend, to our area for some some hijinx during their junior year at Fordham Prep.

As a quick aside, my family has a long history with "The Prep." Two of my brothers attended there (were star athletes), and one of them came back and coached football and rugby later on. As part of my college education minor, I did some student tutoring there. One of my boxing coaches, Mickey Maguire, was the athletic trainer there for decades, so I trained there with him. I also took Drivers Ed there, with the psychic D-E teacher, Mr. Grecco. My oldest son, Luke, whose novel Lebanon Red drops this August, studied there, as did my nephews John-Michael and Eamon. Bob Baisley, who rightfully terrorized me and Lenny at Spellman during our tenure there, transformed into a loveable Mr. Chips at Fordham Prep, where he taught Luke Shakespeare. Father William O'Malley, a star in the film, The Exorcist, was one of Luke's teacher's there.

And our Clan elder, Ferd Beck, the McCaffrey Merlin, was a fixture there forever. BC, his older brother, John (RIP), and his younger brother Doug (RIP) attended The Prep.

Anyway, BC, like Lenny and Murray Collins, some of our other notable highschool acquisitions, became instant Riverdaliens, as if they had been raised with the likes of Joe and me throughout St. Maggies. As much as I would enjoy sharing some of the antics we

all got into, I am saving that for The Riverdale Chronicles, so you will just have to be patient.

But I will share that BC was one of the group who made sure during the later lost years, when we were all so busy establishing careers and parenting, that he looked up as many of the old crew as possible whenever he visited Riverdale, after his emmigration to Rochester, NY. And he always visited my parents, who for some strange reason adored him. Hell, he saw them more than I did.

And they seemed to be just fine with that.

I often have referred to BC as the royal jester. That is because he is extremely smart, very observant, and has the knack of telling you the truth at a time when you needed to hear it, but definitely did not want to. And as annoying as that can be, it is completely admirable and always valuable. For the life of me, I do not know how one of us didn't kill him.

Anyway, it was no surprise that during my writing of KMAG, after I had reestablished my connections with the OFC, that when it came to writing the part involving the evil characters, I was going to give BC a principal role. Something mythic and memorable.

As far as I'm concerned, BC is now, and will remain forever, the new Voldemort. You are welcome, BC. Strap on those FMP's, as tomorrow is your debutante ball. I love you big guy. Thanks for all the advice and the laughs.

Speaking of KMAG, March 23rd is considered the earth birthday for two of the newest, and potentially the most powerful characters in The Claire Trilogy pantheon (and possible sequels - there, I said it).

I chose that birthdate because it is the date when one of the Riverdale crew, Denis "Murray" Collins, passed in a tragic accident when we were all in our late teens. The collective pain felt by all of the crew from that passing led to me picking up a pen (no, it was not a quill) and writing my first creative work (Ode To Murray Collins). It also immersed me in the Collins' Clan and led to my living with Joe and Lenny in Aunt Violet's Flop House, where BC was a regular visitor (I'm pretty sure BC signed the infamous Visitors' log. Have to check with its keeper, Lenny. It is secreted in his very crowded - and permanently locked - vault).

So when it came to selecting an important date of "birth" in The Claire Trilogy, I wanted to commemorate Murray. He will never be forgotten.

So speaking of births, tomorrow KMAG hits the market. Fingers crossed that the rest of the readers respond the way the the second ARC reviewer to post on Goodreads did:

3:41



goodreads.com

 Discover these eagerly awaited reads. >

goodreads



Marie Ruenberg rated a book *****
about 10 hours ago



Kissing My Ass Goodbye (The Claire Trilogy Book 3)

by Tom McCaffrey (Goodreads Author)

Want to Read



Read in January 2022

And so The Claire Trilogy continues.... Felt like forever waiting to read this; so excited now that I have read the advanced copy and I know what was coming. Hated to turn the last page but hope springs eternal.

Kissing My Ass Goodbye is a fantastic read and picks up right where An Alien Appeal leaves off. The eclectic mix of characters remains fascinating, and while I had a hard time believing it myself, this story has gotten even better. The action is constant and unpredictable through the entire book. The full application of the paranormal and magical abilities of the mystical and alien characters, old and new, keeps this book hurtling towards an incredible climax. A serious pay-off. Really enjoyed the new characters! This wondrous group of misfits deal with issues I never could have imagined and did not expect as they are compelled to respond to the evil that comes looking for them. But let's just say that their collective gloves come off. I'm afraid of saying too much more and spoiling the surprises, so now I will simply end with read Kissing My Ass Goodbye, you won't regret it.

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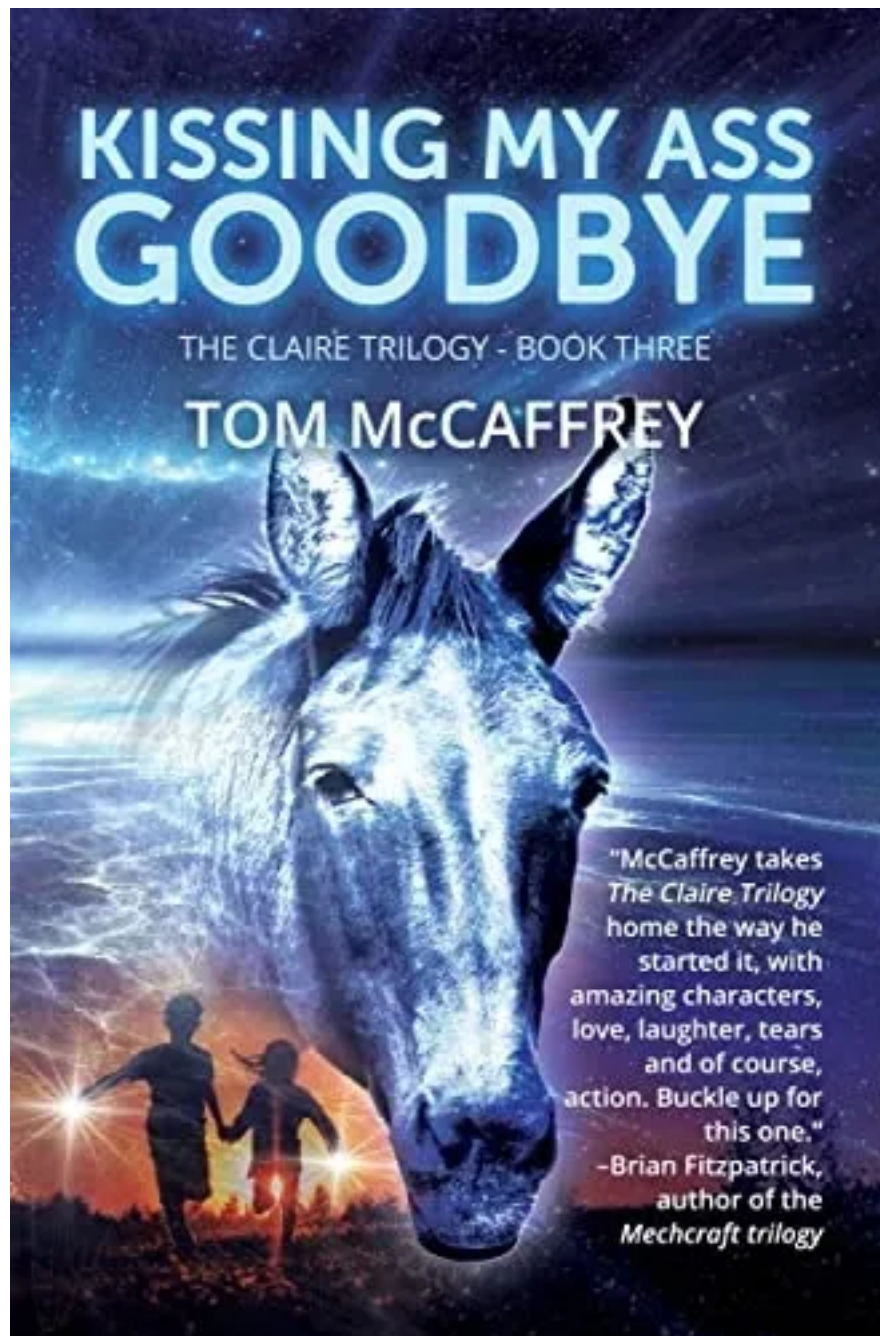
COMPANY

Download on the
App Store

BC may end up being more notable than I thought.
Anyway, I have to deal with Jury Duty and there's a Kitty upstairs
waiting for a cuddle.
So you fine, five readers go out there and get over the hump.
Friday's whispering your name.
But most of all have a great day!

Kissing My Ass Goodbye

March 22, 2022



You never get used to it. The anxiety. It really is like awaiting the birth of a child. This Thursday, *KMAG*, the third book in *The Claire Trilogy*, drops on Amazon, B&N, BRW and other major distribution chains. I've given the story and characters my all. At this point, all I can do is cross my fingers and hope for the best.

Late yesterday, the first review for *KMAG* appeared on Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/59882944>

It was posted by a reader named "rina" who received what I believe is referred to in publishing as an ARC ("Advance Readers Copy").

Unlike Amazon, Goodreads allows for the posting of reviews before the book actually drops.

Thank God it was five stars. It appeared simultaneously with another five star vote (Goodreads and Amazon both allow you to post just a star number without a review). So far so good. Thank you rina and the other early mystery reader for making the time to read *KMAG* and to post a vote and review. I greatly appreciate it. When you get to my age, it is not about the number of book sales.

I've been so blessed just by being given this opportunity to be published at all. Luckily, my physical comfort is not dependant on the royalty stream generated by my writing. I have gotten by in life being a lawyer. For me, it's all about the reader.

You see, what the reader thinks about my stories is really important to me. Maybe its the remnants of my Irish-Catholic Guilt (the Jews might have invented it but our Celtic strain is equally virulent and explains the stereotypical predilection for the bottle). I really hate disappointing people (I know this because I spent a lot of my earlier years - and some of my later ones - doing just that).

I read every review. The good ones, repeatedly, the bad ones just once with only one eye open and holding my breath just to get through it. Never underestimate how painful they can be, even to this thick-skinned mick. The real blessing is that most reviewers, good and bad, refer to me as Tom (or Tim) McCartney so, if its a particularly nasty critique, I get to fool myself into thinking that they are really talking about somebody else.

I don't really focus on what readers say about the mechanics - the grammar, writing or even the editing - because at my age my style is my style and while I try to tell a story in as palatable way as possible, I accept the fact that I'm just not perfect. No one is going to refer to me as the next Hemingway or Twain. I'm not changing modern literature. I am a simple story teller.

So, what is important is what the reader thinks of the story and the characters. The story may be mine (although the voices in my head beg to differ) but I borrowed the characters from a lot of very real

entities whom I have met and loved over the years. Especially my friend and mule Claire. She is every bit as magical as I say she is. If she's in the right mood, she'll probably tell you how we collaborated on the story. Now that's a tale.

I really care what readers think of these characters. Nothing thrills me more than when a reviewer says that they want to come to Berthoud and eat, drink and hang with these characters, because I know then that they see what I see in them. I have been blessed by having been able to hang with them all at different points over my many years. Even the bad guys are really good guys who were included knowing they were going to be bad characters. Except BC, he played to type (wait, I'm kidding. . . maybe). Get those FMP's ready BC!

Anyway, the reviews tell me if I have hit the mark. Did the reader get to escape from their quiet desperation of daily life for a few hours and enjoy themselves hanging with my characters? Did they enjoy the story? Did I make them laugh? Cry? Were they entertained by the experience. Nothing else matters.

So as I await the rest of the reviews of *KMAG* that are bound to arrive on Goodreads and Amazon, let me thank you all in advance for making the time and taking the chance of coming along with me on this little bit of madness. I hope you all enjoy reading *The Claire Trilogy* as much as I enjoyed writing it. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I really need to get moving because I have to cram a lot of law into today so I can perform my civic duty tomorrow and appear for Jury Duty.

Before that I have a kitty to cuddle and rounds to make.

So you fine, five readers go forth and enjoy life.

But most of all, have a great day!

Nunsense & Habits & Wimples & Catholic PTSD & MOS

March 21, 2022



No two ways about it, I had a blast at yesterday's matinee performance of *Nunsense*.

The production values were Off-Broadway level - and I mean that as the ultimate compliment. It had that O-Bway intimacy, as the audience are immediately invited into participating with the production. You are comfortable, which allowed you to focus on enjoying the show. Lighting, sound and staging were exactly what was needed to get every ounce of pleasure from this performance. And the acting, singing and dancing were delicious (I know, a creepy word to use for a stage full of nuns and I will caution the OFC who were also instructed by nuns to keep their comments to themselves).



Okay, I can honestly say for the record (other than Joe Serrano's first bachelor party) I've never seen a nun out of her habit and

wimple so I hope I get this right. I mean, you only have a face to go on.

Starting left to right on the front row in the above photo, matching characters to actresses (I'm old school): Sister Amnesia, sitting, Sister Leo (kneeling) and Sister Robert (loved the Canarsie reference). Back row, left to right: Sister Hubert, Mother Superior and the Piano Nun. If I got any of them wrong, my apologies, Sisters.

The puppet nun was icing on the cake.

The ensemble numbers were always fun as the actresses had a great chemistry on stage together. And the set up - the mass poisoning, dead nuns in a freezer and sister Amnesia's real identity - was funny.

But the best parts of the show were the solos provided to each one of the actresses. And they each made the most of those solos.

Such passion in their performances. They each had the vocal chops and stage presense to carry their tunes admirably.

Lisa and I gave the overall performance a standing ovation.

Well done Director Patrick Payne and Music Director Tanya Jean Daugherty.

Thank you Fay and Greg for the invite. The Longmont Theatre is a perfect venue. Well done on getting it back on its post pandemic feet.

Cannot wait to see Longmont Theatre's next show, *Something Rotten*.

I am no longer pining for Broadway.

But I have to admit, being in an enclosed space with those B&W habits and wimples brought back my Catholic school PTSD. (I did enjoy the reference to to the Latin mass). Everything I ever did wrong between the ages of five (when I started at St. Maggie's) and seventeen (when I left Spellman under cloud) has been slowly scrolling through my brain since the performance. Here it is a day later and my mind hasn't finished with first grade yet (all three paid up members of the OFC - Joe, Lenny & BC, in that order of appearance - have had their hand in my corruption). This is going to be a long week.

Anyway, Lisa and I followed up the performance with a delicious post performance meal at Mike OShays across the street. Lonnie

was his usual affable host and always a pleasure to catch up with.

The food and service were perfect. I highly recommend this place, especially on show nights.

Speaking of long weeks, I have a lot of legal work to get through before I report for jury duty on Wednesday, and then KMAG drops on Thursday, so my anxiety level will be running high.

And Smokey awaits her food and cuddle, so I must flee!

You fine, five readers, take a deep breath and plunge into Monday.

But make it a great day!

Tom's Little Willy

March 20, 2022



I know. It was a trick to catch your eye and make you open today's blog. Sort of like a newspaper headline that starts with SEX. . . . But this blog is one that supports the old bromide, "the devil is in the details."

You see, I ordered a metal bust of Shakespeare on Ebay. Saw a photo of this one and liked it. Didn't read past the price. Hit the purchase button and voila.

When it arrived on Friday, I was out picking up dinner, so Lisa opened the box and left the bust on the countertop for me to see when I walked through the door. I saw her Chesire Cat smile before I spotted the treasure.

It is a solid piece, and relatively heavy. As you can see it has great detail. However, . . .



It . . . is . . . this. . . big. . . .

Now I know all of you kind women out there have now reflexively whispered that placation "size doesn't matter," and, as a toxic male, I appreciate your kindness, but all of you other men out there nonetheless know the truth.

So, if anyone out there ever hears it said that "Tom has a little Willy," I want it to be absolutely clear what that person is talking about.

Moving on, Lisa and I got our Pfizer booster shot yesterday, because Lisa's employment mandated the third shot. I won't debate the politics behind it. I will tell you that my left upper arm remains sore as hell as I type this, and I was good for shit since we arrived back home, but I am feeling better now. I will say that the lovely woman who gave me my booster at Wallgreens (whenever I type lines like this I can hear Lenny, BC and Joe cackling) was very

funny and matched each of my best humorous quips with one of her own so when I finally said, "I hope you don't mind if I don't look when you shove that in because I'm just a big pussy" she responded, without missing a beat, "Don't you worry, I won't look either." I was laughing as the needle entered my arm. But before that happened, I got this great photograph while I was out on my early morning rotation. I call it my Moon Sign.



Of course, the juxtaposition makes me wonder if all relationships between the Maureens and Garys of the world are doomed. Anyway, the good news is that today, Lisa and I are attending a matinee performance of *Nunsense* at the Longmont Theatre. Given that BC has been making some noise about the pending release of KMAG this Thursday, I will ask Lisa not to wear her "Mrs. Lincoln" button to this performance.

I have promised BC that I intend to make him the new Voldemort in adult modern fantasy, and I received an omen yesterday when the below Amazon Review was posted for AAA:



NJM

5.0 out of 5 stars **Better than Harry Potter**

Reviewed in the United States on March 19, 2022

Verified Purchase

My wife and I both read books 1 & 2. We loved them and reserved the next in the series. Please write faster. Such fantastic story telling I have not experienced. Phone home.

(Bold in the Original)

Thank you NJM and wife. I greatly appreciate the compliment. Of course BC has become more cautious since I made a light hearted suggestion that my readers may want to stone him in the streets once they read KMAG and so he sends me photos from his (and his lovely and ever patient wife Nan's) tropical vacation to demonstrate that he does pay attention to the small print and will prove as wiley as the original Voldemort in avoiding his demise:



Well, on that note, I must go see a kitty about a cuddle (cue cackling) . . . before I spend my morning shoveling mule muffins . . . before we set out to the theatre.

You fine, five readers make it a day of rest, and hopefully you'll be reading a book.

And somebody buy BC a beer. . . . at the above bar!

But, whatever you are doing on this day of heavenly mandated rest, make it a great one.

Worm Moon - NEVER F*CK WITH CLAIRE THE MULE - A Favor

March 19, 2022



Last night's Worm Moon was the last full moon of winter, given that the Spring Equinox occurs tomorrow. Personally, I'm thrilled, because while I enjoy the four seasons, I get tired of winter more quickly than the rest.

I have my intentions candle burning.

The naming of the lunar cycles in North America is handed down from its indigenous people. To the northern tribes, this was called the Crow Moon, in honor of the reappearing cawing crows that signal the end of winter. (Mine have all returned). Other northern tribes called it the Crust Moon, given the crust of snow still prevalent in the colder climates (we still have some). Some tribes that lived among the maple woods referred to it as the Sap or Sugar Moon for it was the time when they tapped these trees for their sweet syrup. Southern Native American tribes named this the Worm Moon, due to the nutrient laden worm *merde* in the digested soil as the earthworms started to stir after the long winter.

I am ready to stir and say goodbye to this winter.

Full Moons fittingly signify an ending or conclusion. A time when things you have worked on come to fruition.

This is perfect because my novel, *Kissing My Ass Goodbye*, drops this Thursday, March 24th. It is the third and final (?) novel in *The Claire Trilogy*, following on the heels of the successful launches of its sisters *The Wise Ass* (2/18/21) and *An Alien Appeal* (12/23/21). I am very proud of this small body of work, warts and all (I'm the Slip Mahoney of literature). I love every one of the characters (all of which are based on real people, even the bad guys - whom I all love - some bearing the same names). All of the storylines and themes developed in the first two books are seamlessly woven together and catalyzed by topical events. The readers emotions are bound to run the gamut (gambit for some). There is the strengthening and extending of the themes of love and family. There is lots of magic, mysticism and sci-fi. There are the ultimate bad guys. There is birth and death. And this book has far more action than the first two and what some inner circle readers have described as a big Hollywood ending. Combine the feel of the endings of *The Godfather* and any (all) season(s) of *Yellowstone*.

Two hints:

The concept of family is universal.

Never fuck with Claire the Mule!

And, as with the first two books, there is a promise of more to come, future and past, but you must read it to the very, very, very end (and please don't cheat, it will ruin the experience, seriously).

The one favor I beg of any and all that read this book, is that if and when they post their reviews, good or bad (although I hope its all good), that they don't provide any specific spoilers. This is the big pay-off, it should be earned through reading. There are no participation medals. And don't be misled by the title, it's Bronx slang.

So for any of you who have not yet read *TWA* and/or *AAA*, you still have time to catch up before Thursday's dropping of *KMAG*. (You don't want to be the only one at the virtual watercooler - do they still have those? - not knowing these characters). They are both quick reads and are even more fun when read back-to-back. You could literally finish them both in this weekend, just keep hydrated. Download them on Kindle and get started. You'll be glad you did.

For all of those that have already read the first two books, give them a refresher read, you won't want to miss any of the details. Every one of them, even references to smell, surfaces in *KMAG*.

Anyway, Claire's farrier is coming this morning to give Claire and Honey their bi-monthly mani-pedi. They want to look their best for the book launch. That means a muddy game of ringalevio before the harnessing, so I better get my good foot on.

Plus, Smokey awaits.

The rest of you fine, five readers, mute your cell phones, pick up *TCT*, and remember, keep hydrated.

But most of all, have a great day.

Mike O'Shays - St. Patty's Day - Comhghairdeas Lonnie Bell!

March 18, 2022



Lisa and I took our oldest granddaughter Scarlett (yes, the basis for the character in TCT - she's just as magical) for our first solo dinner

out (sans her siblings and parents) so we figured what could be more memorable than to do so on St. Patty's Day at MOS. Scarlett was marvelous! She enjoyed the pre-dinner floor (car) show of having my totally insane but brilliant friend and law partner Robert Meloni (yep, he's the mob lawyer in TWA) serenade her over the car's speaker system as we drove to our destination. Robert's singing voice (and personality) is comparable to Nathan Lane's. Put a big smile on Scarlett's face.

I have to say that I've never seen MOS more crowded and busy than it was yesterday evening.



Lisa had corn beef and cabbage and Scarlett had a MOS burger with fries and a pickle. I had potato skins with cheese.

Lonnie had brought on extra staff and everyone was hustling to keep the punters happy. The background noise was Irish music, glasses clinking, and laughter.

I made my rounds to say hello to some of the regular diners like, left to right (top photo), Pete (Krista's husband) and Motorcycle Kyle, to whom I delivered inscribed paperback copies of TWA/AAA for being such a great friend and supporter.

And below, the lovelies, Jenny and Krista:



And Krista and her husband (a really great guy whose first name is Jeff and his mother's maiden name is the fine Irish "O'Malley").
They are a lovely couple:



I have to tell you that these folks are the friendliest and most fun-loving bunch. An absolute pleasure to be around.

But I spent a lot of time people watching, one of my favorite pastimes, and there was not one person in this crowded bar who was not wearing the most natural and magnificent smile. Laughter flowed freely. They put the "Happy" in "St. Patrick's Day."

It felt like home.

And I listened and watched as Lonnie Bell - a fine Scottish-Celtic name - never stopped moving or managing his totally engaged staff like a Broadway stage director on opening night, as they seamlessly seated and served their customers and then repeated the process over and over without losing their own smile and friendly banter.

And the bartenders never stopped serving libations to the, at times, three deep crowd, all wearing some reflection of their desire to acknowledge and represent the Irish culture, even those that were doing so on a day-pass.

Lonnie, of course, was the maestro that made this all happen.

Bravo Lonnie, *Comhghairdeas!* .

In what was one of the evening's coolest sights, I saw Lonnie blind pass a hand towel over a crowd to the center of an empty booth ten feet away just as one of the servers arrived there to grab it and wipe down its table for the next service. That pass would have left John Stockton in his prime as floor general for the Utah Jazz seething with envy.

Finally, just before I left, Lonnie introduced me to this fine establishment's owner, Reuben, a warm man, who obviously appreciated that MOS is a gem, a wonderful place, with equally wonderful staff and customers.

Fully satisfied that I had regained my sense of Irish community in the far reaches of Northern Colorado, Lisa and I dropped Scarlett at home and then returned to Casa Claire, and after serving my mules their dinner, we watched *The Quiet Man* and *The Departed* to conclude our celebration of the complex nature of the Irish diaspora.

But what would St. Patty's Day be without a photo of yesterday's NYC parade with the NYPD Emerald Society, shot and shared by

our Clan member, Patrick Moulton, who was on a nearby jobsite in Manhattan at just the right moment. Thanks Patrick, love to the new wife and the rest of the Moulton family. Thanks Brother Mike Moulton for sharing the photo. Bless the Green and the Blue (Mark, Sara and Dana).



And given the Irish culture's strong bond with the supernatural, maybe last night's magic was enhanced by the first stage in this month's full moon cycle.



Hey, you never know. The Spring Equinox is tomorrow. My candles are burning.

Anyway, Friday awaits like that beautiful and intelligent person on that first date. The possibilities are endless, especially at the apotheosis of a full moon.

So you fine, five readers go out and enjoy your Friday.

But most of all, have a great day.

Happy St. Patty's Day

March 17, 2022



Books and Bevies



Here at Books and Bevies, we strive to pair and share good literature and libations, from children to adults, memoirs to fantasy, hot chocolate to hot toddies! We help writers get their work out to the world and readers find their next big adventure.

Tom McCaffrey and THE WISE ASS



- March 16, 2022



About the book: THE WISE ASS (along with the remainder of The Claire Trilogy - An Alien Appeal and Kissing My Ass Goodbye) is The Firm meets Goodfellas meets Wizard of Oz meets Mr. Ed meets ~~Mark & Windy~~ meets The Craft meets

So yesterday, Kerry Fryar Freeman - <https://www.blogger.com/profile/17766897956551810849> - a writer who is also the genius behind *Books and Bevies*, publicly put together The Claire Trilogy and The Macallan Scotch in a wonderful blog that can be found here: <https://booksandbevies.blogspot.com/2022/03/tom-mccaffrey-and-wise-ass.html>.

She even gave Lenahan, my lifelong friend who appears in the above photo, looking far more interesting than the Dos Equis guy, a shout out at the end of the blog. How cool is that? Thank you Kerry!

So if any of you are out there writing something, keep in mind that there are a number of ways to appeal to different demographics of readership.

My characters all happen to love The Macallan Scotch single malt. Now you are all probably saying to yourself - "But Tom, The Macallan is a Scotch Whisky. This is St. Patty's Day!"

Well, to me, a Celt is a Celt, so on this very special day, I welcome the Scotts, Welsh and Irish Clans to celebrate our common ancestry.

Indeed, the purely anecdotal McCaffrey oral history (I should pause here for some off colored remarks by Lenny, Joe and BC) suggests that the McCaffreys were originally a Celtic Clan of successful mercenaries in Scotland, who after securing power for one of the warring Scott leaders, were immediately rounded up in their celebratory inebriated state and shipped off to Northern Ireland, so they could not repeat their conquering on behalf of another Scott Laird. They say we led from the front. Given my family's history since arriving in the US, this would explain a lot.

(Side Note: One of my brothers - yes the same that were all murdered in the Novels, which very accurately captured them - disagrees with this rendition of our family history - which is one of the many reasons I so happily took them all out in The Claire Trilogy. There can only be one Bard.)

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, now our branch of the McCaffreys happily settled in Tyrone and our Scottish burr converted to a lovely Northern Ireland's brogue. Then, hundreds of years later, my

branch of the emmigrating McCaffreys married one of the Redden girls and one of their sons married a Burke/Igo daughter from another emmigrated family from Galway, and the rest, as they say, is history.

So its perfectly acceptable in my literary universe that the emmigrated extraterrestrials would have shared their passion for The Macallan with their human family and that the Irish Jimmy Moran and the rest of the crew of transplanted misfits would have seen the brilliance in that selection. A Celt is a Celt is a Celt.

So, almost back to reality, there the McCaffreys were, many years later, this Irish family in Riverdale, among a lot of Irish families in Riverdale.

Of course we celebrated St. Patty's Day.

When we were young, our parents/grandparents took us to the NYC St. Patty's Day Parade, where we proudly wore our green and waved the Tricolour, listened to a lot of bagpipers and mixed with thousands of Irish cousins that sounded like our grandparents and marched in and otherwise observed this fine spectacle.

As we got a wee bit older, my generation would all get very drunk and make our way down to the same parade, and unfortunately I do not remember much from those times.

As we got a wee bit older still, we skipped the parade and got very drunk in the Irish bars that once littered the Bronx and Manhattan.

That often led to beer muscle brawling. For purposes of this blog post only, I don't remember much from those times, but I do recommend you keep an eye out for future novels, where I may have recovered a clearer memory.

When we moved out to Colorado, we took our heritage with us (My Ginger Nephew - Evan The Red - gave us this sign - Helen the wonderful, gave us the eye).



Out here in Colorado, I have not yet fully reestablished my Irish roots, so my St. Patty's Day celebration has been reduced to wearing a bit of green, exchanging good wishes with my family and friends (I exchanged my early "Happy St. Patty's Day" with Colin Broderick during our weekly phone call yesterday - which sounded all the more authentic with his fine Irish brogue) and watching *The Quiet Man* with John Wayne (my mother's favorite actor). However, I have recently made a major inroad into reestablishing a solid Celtic cultural base through the management and patrons of Mike OShays in Longmont, who have been celebrating St. Patty's Day with events all week and are looking forward to a full house this evening on this feast of feasts days.

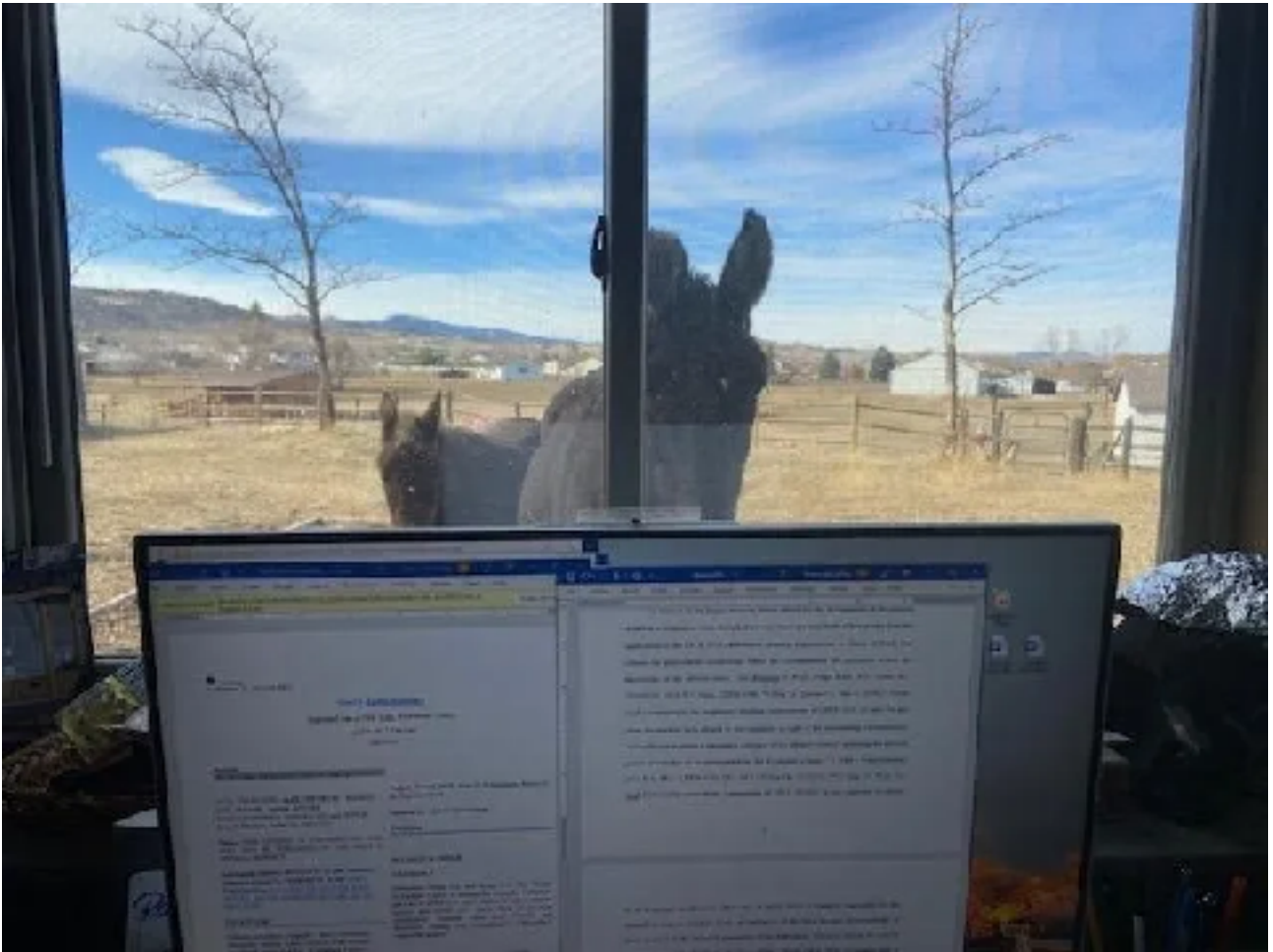
Hopefully, Lisa and I can sneak in for a quick meal and a round of a thousand warm hello's at some point this evening. *Céad Míle Fáilte!*

After all, we are all Irish today.

(So now that I've gotten my replacement keyboard I can finish this properly (the other one crapped out right at the end).
So you fine, five readers make it a great day! *Erin go bragh!*

When Mules Go Bad

March 16, 2022



I was knee deep in legal alligators yesterday, working feverishly on finishing yet another motion, when I felt that familiar sensation of being watched (alliteration). As I slowly stood to peer over the top of my screen, I could hear the sounds of the heralding shark attack music in Jaws playing in my head (more alliteration).

There was Claire in her full Godfather pose, her hench-mule, Honey, standing just behind her in that perfect "I got your back" pose that my cousin, Apples, used to regularly rock back in the day. This did not bode well.

It's true, I had been avoiding paying the vigg. I had it, really. I honestly had, but I was just too busy yesterday to step away from the desk and walk out to the kitchenette by those two sliding back

doors and leave what has risen now to a good five pounds of carrots out on the table broken into crunchable pieces. But I meant no disrespect.

I knew that look. It bore the promise of raised tales and mounds of moist mule muffins, and given the sudden upturn in temperatures, there was no way I wasn't going to suffer from an olfactory beatdown.

Without breaking eye contact, I raised both hands in supplication, then slowly backed away from my desk and moved towards the office door to the left. I then gesticulated wildly doing my best impersonation of Marcel Marceau, to let Claire know that I was caving and heading off down that long dark hallway, past the bathroom and the laundryroom in the direction of the back door. I only hoped it was not too late.

I almost cracked a nail tearing open that fortified plastic bag as I raced to free those carrots while I slid away from the open fridge out through the back door. I could sense Claire and Honey ambling towards me. Claire was mumbling something in her husky voice. Honey whistled a haunting song. I was working like a desperate contestant in Top Chef trying to plate that meal before the final buzzer.

I could feel the steam of Claire's hot breath on the back of my neck as I lay the last oversized sweet orange spike on the table. I could hear Honey's impatient hoof tapping on the cement behind me. Was it too late for me?

I spun in the direction of the spot outside my office window, my eyes closed, I felt the two large powerful animals slide past me towards their extorted rewards. Honey threw me a slight shoulder tap as she passed just to let me know that I had just dodged a dose of large brown bullets, but she was watching me.

As I opened my eyes, I released a deep breath with my best west of Ireland sigh. Claire had cut me a break. No . . . shit . . . Sherlock. The sound of carrot crunching behind me was deafening. I knew I better disappear before the menacing mules changed their minds.

Moments later, I was never so happy to be back in front of a computer monitor with my legal work in front of me.

And by the way, despite that near mule miss, my legal brief was brilliant.

But more légal travail awaits me today. So I better get to my kitty cuddling and my morning rounds. Then make sure I leave this morning's carrots out for their collection before I descend into the legal mines. Mules have amazing memories and can be very unforgiving. And the armed asses of attitudinal asses are always available and best to be avoided. Enough said.

So you fine, five readers go out there and get over that hump. No disrespect to Thursday, but I can hear Friday singing its soft siren song in the distance.

But most of all, you all have a great day!

The Joys Of Grandparenting

March 15, 2022



Yesterday, Lisa was off from work, so the granddaughters stopped by for a visit. For a little while it was just Lisa and our oldest granddaughter, Scarlett. So the two of them went out back and hung with Claire, with Honey giving them all some extra space.

During their time outside, Scarlett, who turns six this summer and has gone camping with her family, asked Lisa if she would allow her to make a small firepit. So Lisa supervised as Scarlett built a small one in the middle of the silty clearing that used to be at the bottom of the pond. Scarlett showed Lisa how she had learned to gather stones and kindling to create the pit, and, with a five gallon bucket of water at the ready, Lisa watched as Scarlett ignited the kindling. Voila. Prometheus would be proud.

It brought me back to all of the things my grandparents taught me. Spaghetti taught me how to work with tools and do manual labor, both on an involuntary basis. My grandmother, Posie, taught me how to iron and sew, and the basics of cooking. The ironing kept me in dress shirts as a lawyer and came in very handy when my daughter spent a few years at private Catholic School. I can still iron a pleated skirt better than anyone. And there is nothing I cannot stitch back together with a needle and thread, although it takes me much longer to thread the needle than it used to. I have maintained my basic skills in cooking, but I'm never going to be a Lenahan.

My maternal grandfather, Tom Burke, taught me what it meant to sit down quietly and read, when the world around you might be pure madness, especially when we, his grandchildren, came to visit. His wife, Bridey ("Nana") Burke, taught me how to tell a fantastic and captivating story, the wilder, the better. She was magical.

Grandparents teach grandchildren things because in today's world, parents are often too busy trying to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. At least that was the case in my multigenerational home back in the Bronx.

Lisa has been great at sitting with the grandchildren and working with them on their writing and drawing skills, and she does arts and crafts with them. She also reads to them. She takes them for walks and feeds treats to the local horses and dogs with them. And they talk about "stuff."

I carry on the role of Nana. Whenever we are all talking, I tell the young children the most outlandish tales, which causes my granddaughters to look to Lisa to see whether I should be believed. They all pick up on her almost imperceptible head shake or eye roll cues, which signals that I may not be believed, but I can be enjoyed. And that's all right with me.

Now if I can just teach them how to shovel mule muffins.

Well, I wasted a lot of time this morning recovering enough memory to upload this photo, so I have to cut this short and tend to my kitty, then start my workday.

The rest of you fine, five readers, if you are of the grandparent generation, teach your grandchildren something no one else can.

They are your only true legacy on this earth. They will remember. But most of all, have a great day.

Finally. . . . The Thaw. . . . RIP Mister Rogers

March 14, 2022



Yesterday was a beautiful day, which meant I had to get outside and start shovelling shit before the next snow storm comes along to

bury it. The timing is tricky. You have to get outside late enough for the sun to warm the frozen piles so you have half a chance to pry them loose, but early enough so that the frozen earth doesn't turn to muck and make it impossible to push the feces laden wheel barrow the length of the property to Hadrian's Wall.



I use that pitchfork to pry the mule muffins loose and then a scooper to get them into the barrow. Yesterday was a record six barrows.

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=l%27m+too+old+for+this+shit&view=detail&mid=FBE94BFBB132866C888BFBE94BFBB132866C888B&FORM=VIRE)

[q=l%27m+too+old+for+this+shit&view=detail&mid=FBE94BFBB132866C888BFBE94BFBB132866C888B&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=l%27m+too+old+for+this+shit&view=detail&mid=FBE94BFBB132866C888BFBE94BFBB132866C888B&FORM=VIRE)

Anyway, I snapped an American Gothic styled selfie to send to the OFC - as I was keeping them abreast of each barrow while they enjoyed their Sunday - and I realized that if Dante was right, and, as a lawyer, I am doomed to an eternity in Hades, I should take a page from another great Poet:

“Better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven.” John Milton,
Paradise Lost

Because if I'm going South, I'm gunning for the top job. So I'll use the above photo as my campaign poster (although I may choose to run against Poseidon as my back up plan):

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=poseidon+release+the+kraken&&view=detail&mid=8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26sc%3D0-27%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D73EDCC9D94644A879D26F4FBB866C397)

[q=poseidon+release+the+kraken&&view=detail&mid=8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26sc%3D0-27%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D73EDCC9D94644A879D26F4FBB866C397](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=poseidon+release+the+kraken&&view=detail&mid=8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D8EAE2CFF9F8EAD14F50D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dposeidon%2Brelease%2Bthe%2Bkraken%26sc%3D0-27%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D73EDCC9D94644A879D26F4FBB866C397)

(side note: the Kraken is a Norse myth, not a Greek). Speaking of . . . Hi Helen!

Anyway, two of the three bastards sent me visuals back, just to taunt me:

Joe:



Given Joe's latest head shot, a head shot was out of the question.
And BC:



BC is like a bull in china shop. That tree was standing two minutes before that photo. You really cannot take him anywhere.

I'm still waiting for Lenny's photo holding his magical staff (and that's not a euphemism, although Lenny will beg to differ).

Anyway, you should remember both Joe & BC's photos just in case you meet them in the streets. They are two of the very bad guys in KMAG, which drops in ten days. Feel free to stone them. Trust me, you will want to, especially BC.

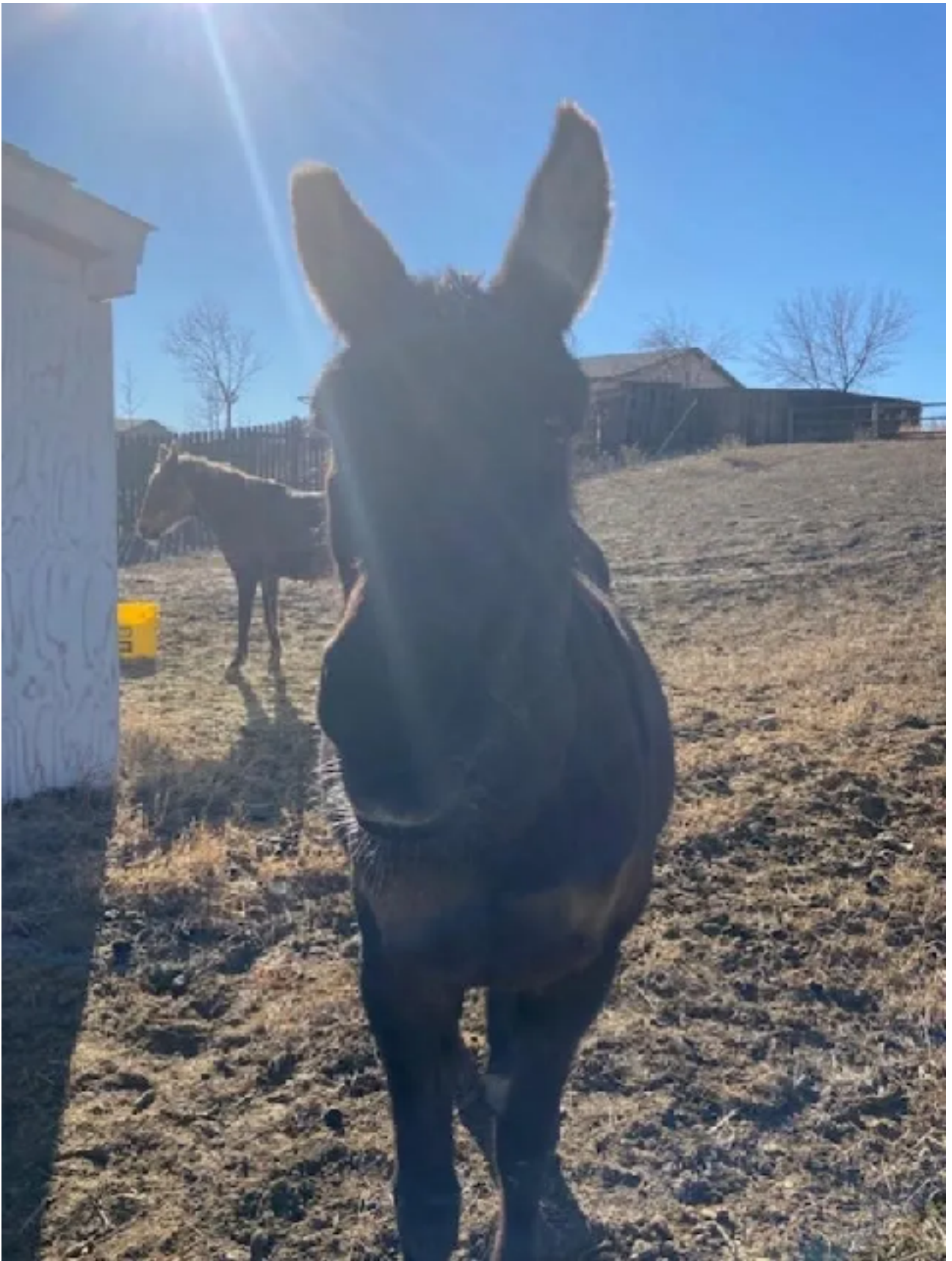
The only thing in common in our three photos is the blueness of the sky. The major difference? I was working, and they were not.

Someday, after Hollywood comes calling, I too shall retire (from the law, never the writing).

But hopefully I'll also never stop shoveling Claire's shit (it really is a great work out).

Speaking of which, yesterday was the second anniversary of the passing of Mister Rogers. It was continuously on my mind as I had to pass his grave twelve times counting back and forth along the route to Hadrian's wall. Claire remained in a fittingly somber mood.

I gave her an extra bag of carrots. Honey did her best to distract her.



I believe that particular rey of light was MR saying hello!

Pam Ervin, my mule whisperer and a character in The Claire Trilogy, sent me a text offering her condolences, she was at the house the days both Claire and MR arrived, and a regular visitor to see C & MR, and I would be lying if I denied having to reach for a Kleenex. RIP MR!



Did get to stop by Mike OShays for an early dinner with Lisa and got to shoot the shit with Lonnie and staff as well as some of the other regular diners that are wonderful people and now fans of The Claire Trilogy, including Motorcycle Kyle (who is half way through AAA) so I shared with the group the genesis of the name Petrichor. However, speaking of sharing, before I go, I have to share this photo that I took while sitting at our favorite table by the front of the MOS establishment (the place really is as welcoming as the fictitious Cheers). The Sunday matinee for the Longmont Theatre's production of Nunsense was about to start, and as I glanced across

at the marquee, what do I spot but a gaggle of nuns entering the theater.

By the time I got my iPhone out, I was only able to snap the last of them entering the through the front doors.



And here's a close up:



What are the odds? Being raised Catholic, those habits and wimples still send chills down my spine, and not in a kinky way. Cannot wait to see the performance - we are going to next Sunday's matinee.

Anyway, it is Monday again, but I'm not going to make it an issue, especially since St. Patty's Day falls this week, so get your Irish on!

Nor should you fine, five readers fret over the first work day of the week (love that alliteration) Go forth and conquer.

But have a great day!

What A Difference A 40 + Degree Swing Makes

March 13, 2022



Yesterday's weather turned delightful going from 18 degrees to the low sixties. But it was get shit done day. My big ticket item was

bringing my Toyota in for its regular servicing. Three and a half hours later and over 600 dollars poorer, I drove the reconstituted Stella home, with one quick stop to pick up fruits and veggies, which then consumed the remainder of my afternoon chopping and bagging for the week. Claire had to have been good for ten pound of carrot extortions while I worked, but I got to see her dance to "Record Player" (great song), so it was worth it. Smokey took advantage of the spring like weather to sit, like Horton hearing a Hoo, on one of Jack the Spruce's branches:



The good news is that the warm weather is here for another couple of days. The bad news is thjat it means I have a lot of shoveling to get to this morning.

Speaking of good news/bad news, For the first part, my dear friend Joe Serrano, his wife Donna and his oldest daughter, the Physician's Assistant are vacationing in Puerto Rico. The second, Joe's head is a magnet for injury from swings, racket ball courts and

now an elevator (The mystery continues, he must stop pressing those floor buttons with his noggin'). . . .



At this point they must be sewing the scar tissue together, and his bald head must resemble a keloid road map. But happy to learn that Joe has a few of his cat-lives remaining (although I believe he must be borrowing them now from his Saintly wife, Donna). Joe was the talk of the Saturday Night PR-ER with his Pimpin shirt.

The good news is that I'm certain BC is staying at Joe's house during his absence.

Get better Joe, make sure you tidy up after yourself BC.

Also want to give a shout out to another BIL, Beau (with his twin Victor - the main bad guys in KMAG) who is back in the hospital for a brief stay while the doctors figure out what other parts he really no longer needs anymore. Keep your junk tightly clutched in your fists Beau, they can take anything else. Get better soon.

Finally, a shout out to my Mike O'Shays buddy Kyle the motorcycle guy, who called me over the weekend to let me know how much he enjoyed TWA (and is now reading AAA). Thanks for the kind words, I enjoyed chatting with you - I gave him all the cool back stories - so if you see him in MOS hit him up and make him share.

Anyway, Smokey awaits, then a shit-load of shit-shovelling. So I better get at it.

It's Sunday, so you fine, five readers rest.

But make it a great day!

PS: Got an email from Yvette Benson from the Collins Family's old stomping grounds (with Jaysree and Jimmy Whitelaw) just off the east-side of the lower Grand concourse (I was off the west side towards Yankee Stadium), who, after complementing TWA & AAA, tried to convince me that my blog readership had advanced to 6.

However, given the vagaries of life, Claire's Law provides that the individual make-up of my group of blog readers on a daily basis does not remain a constant, so there is never more readers on any given day than five, exactly. But thanks for tuning in Yvette, don't give up your spot.

Still Cold - But Warmth Is Around The Corner

March 12, 2022



That was one of the photos I would have shown you yesterday, when it was 0 degrees at Casa Claire. I went out to break the ice

off the water bucket and could only chip a hole in the ice large enough to insert the claw from my hammer and lift the ice off the top of the bucket.



Today is a balmy 18 degrees. Shorts weather.

I kid you not. There will be men (and some women) out there today with shorts on. Make me feel like a complete wuss. I was picking up a pizza the other freezing cold evening from Side Tracked and was bullshitting with Jimmy, its owner, who was sitting at the bar in shorts and a t-shirt. I told him he was shaming me as I was in full winter gear - a hoodie sweatshirt and winter hat - and he replied "Well, it was warm when I got here." So I replied, "What month was that?" and he responded "Twenty-six years ago." I hope that when I hit 26 years in Colorado -- which I fully intend to do -- I have some semblance of Jimmy's Colorado wit. But I hear warm weather is coming. I'll keep you posted.

Well today I have to take Stella, our magical Toyota (yes from The Claire Trilogy), not our granddaughter, in for its whatever mile maintenance. That will eat my morning so maybe I can actually start reading one of the books in my TBR stack. It is so hard to read for pleasure (or write for pleasure) after a long day of reading and writing for law. I mean you are literally cross-eyed and your brain is like my computer - just no more room for anything.

Speaking of grandchildren, my wintertime playboy of a grandson facetimed me yesterday from Atlanta to fact check my posting the other day about his Breckenridge exploits. He insisted I correct the post to not only show that he descended on the Black Diamond trail (not the Blue - what can I say, I'm color blind) from on top of the tallest mountain, with the "highest lift" in North America, but then went on to snowboard down from the top of all of the other 5 Breckenridge mountains. He stayed on the call until he saw that I had corrected it. Little rat bastard. Well, I guess it could be worse.

It could have been his publicist calling.

Speaking of wonderful people, the Polish childrens book author - Aleksandra Tryniecka ("Bunky and the Walms: The Christmas Story" (2021) <https://www.aleksandratriyniecka.com>) - and I have been regularly exchanging on-line correspondence. She recently received the inscribed copies of TWA & AAA (my response to her sending me the inscription for her beautiful book. She is an absolute sweetheart and a fine writer with a true love for children (she is also a teacher). She is in the midst of the chaos in Poland that is facing an overwhelming refugee crisis from the Ukraine. It was touching that she mentioned that receiving the books was a bright spot among all the darkness. She mentioned that she and her fiance, Chris, a Colorado native, are hoping to be in Colorado in August so I gave her my cell and hopefully we all can meet up when they get here.

We in this country cannot fully appreciate the madness going on in the world. My prayers are for and with the people of Ukraine and all of the surrounding countries.

Anyway, Smokey is waiting so I must start my day.

The rest of you do something fun.

ANd have a great day.

Tired of Being Cold. . . But It's Friday

March 11, 2022

For some reason my computer is giving me a hard time this morning and not allowing me to upload a photo. I am rapidly running out of storage and my quick tricks are not working any more.

For the second day in a row we are in low single Farenheight digits.

The five gallon bucket of hot water I just brought out to C & H will keep from freezing over for maybe an hour. That will give my magic mules time to wash down this morning's breakfast, which sits under the heaters in the barn. They still have access to the heated bucket of H2O out by Gepeddo's studio for when they wander out on the back stretch, which I will refill come dawn, and I just hammered open the other water bucket if they get desperate for a drink. The ice cover was thick.

Still my mules never complain. They are happy with their lots in life. It could be worse.

And they are right.

I must take my lesson from them. After all, I'm sitting in a warm office typing away at my desk. The lights are on and I have a hot coffee waiting for me upstairs where I will go and give Smokey a nice cuddle before sending her back to her heated bomb shelter.

The equines along my route will still come to their fences at my approach, whiskers frozen by the steam jets blasting from their nostrils, and we will still share some gossip, quickly, while I unload fistfuls of chopped treats before heading back for another hot cup of java. The dogs won't be out because their owners are kind enough to keep them warm inside their houses on days like this.

And then I'll sit back down at my desk and begin my legal workday battling on the latest motion that has come in on yet another matter.

And I am thankful for that because it is my legal skills (as well as my partner's) that keep the monthly nut covered. And I like the daily game of three dimensional chess that a good law practice offers you. Problem solving keeps your mind sharp. And I am competitive by nature.

So let me get to it and hopefully I can figure out how to free up more memory, computer and human, before tomorrow.

But don't be forelorn, after all, it is Friday, the best day of the week.

So you fine, five readers day dream the work day away, and set your sights on the weekend.

Me, I'll be daydreaming of that movie deal, and about writing my next novel.

But most of all, make today a great one. It's Friday!

A Series Of Contemplative Moments On A Cold Morning

March 10, 2022



Whenever I walk out my back door in the early morning hours I never know what I may see. What caught my eye this morning was

that as I walked out towards the barn in my muckboots and work gloves, with my gallon bag filled with chopped carrots and apples, and my five gallon bucket of steaming hot water, the barn light appeared as never before. There was a beam of crystalized light heading straight into the atmosphere. It instantly reminded me of when NYC would send those blue beams of light heavenward every 9-11 to commemorate the fallen heroes, especially the neighborhood heroes I knew like Rocky O'Hagan and Bill McGinn, and my Spellman Classmate, Orio Palmer.

This light also made me think of the smile of my recently fallen SIL Michelle Sacca. https://www.weremember.com/michele-sacca/5c1p/memories?utm_source=memoriams&utm_campaign=Family-Funeral%20%26%20Cremation&utm_medium=email.

Finally, given the light's source, it made me think of Mister Rodgers, the love of Claire's life and the sweetest equine I have ever met.



I noticed recently that Claire has been spending some alone time away from Honey out by MR's gravesight. A couple of days ago,

just before the latest snow fall, I spotted her out there in the late afternoon, motionless, her shadow crossing the grave, in deep contemplation.



It reminded me of those times Lisa and I would take my mother up to the Gates of Heaven Cemetery in Westchester, NY, to visit my father's grave. We would leave her with her thoughts, memories, and rosary, and the sounds of Dad's beloved wind chimes tinkling in the tree abutting his headstone, with or without a breeze, while we made the grand tour of all of the family and friends - like Spaghetti, Posie and BJ Delaney - that are buried there (the McCaffrey version of Paris' pere-lachaise cemetery - pere-lachaise.com). It just felt wrong to intrude on Mom's moment. I felt the same way about Claire, but I captured it anyway. And when I sat down today and glanced at the lower right corner of the computer screen, I noticed the date, and realized that Mr. Rogers' passing will have been two years this weekend. He died on Friday, March 13, 2020. I really miss that big guy. Obviously, so does Claire.

So when I came in to write my blog, and I transferred this morning's photo to my computer, that's when I first spotted that tiny light colored shape passing over the light beam. It wasn't a plane, there was no sound or flashing lights. It wasn't a bug, it is in the low teens this morning. And the birds have not yet awakened.

Let's just call it a sign, that all of the creatures and people I am thinking about on this dark and freezing morning, acknowledged in that moment that connection that can never be broken. And I take great solace in that.

Well, there is a live cat to cuddle this morning before I return to the legal salt mines.

You fine, five readers, give Thursday your respectful best as you slide past it towards the always promising Friday.

And take that moment to think of your love ones that have crossed the veil, then look for that sign as they acknowledge that thought.

But most of all, have a great day.

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

March 9, 2022



That's my grandson, Lucian Mattiace, standing before a sign up on top of Imperial Mountain, the tallest peak in the Breckenridge area.

He told my wife, Lisa, during his brief visit on Saturday, that it was his goal on this trip to work his way up the most challenging "blue" level ski trails and finally make it to a run off the top of Imperial before they had to wrap up the trip and return home on Thursday.

Well, our daughter, Jackie, shared this photo yesterday. Lucian hit his goal a day early.

He climbed to the top the mountain he wanted to climb, and then snowboarded his way back down.

In the process, he went down the highest lift in North America, and snowboarded the Black Diamond ski trail the whole way down. In addition, Lucian snowboarded down from all five peaks in Breckenridge.

Mission accomplished. On to the next goal.

Goals are important. They can be simple, like accomplishing what is required for the daily necessities in life. Walking the dog (I just let mine run out back), taking out the garbage, doing the laundry, shopping for groceries, paying your bills on time, fixing that broken whatever. I add in stuffing hay bags and scooping up mule poop.

Then there are those larger daily goals, like completing work projects within their required deadlines, making it to that community meeting, starting and completing that home remodeling project.

While a lot of these sound more like obligations to be met, if you don't make them your own and treat them like your personal goals, you won't do them well, and maybe not at all. Doctor Wayne Dyer - a brilliant and saintly man - once said "if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

I know this because I spent the first two decades of my life not setting goals. As a result, while I had a lot of fun, I just went with the flow. I got myself tossed out of both high school and college, took dead end jobs that I didn't care about and could easily quit or be fired from just to make enough money to pay for the rent and the fun. I disappointed a whole lot of people along the way (and to each and every one of you, I'm sorry). I was acutely aware of that well-earned feeling of disappointment, and just accepted that

sooner or later I was going to let everyone around me down, including myself.

Luckily enough, that changed after my twentieth birthday. I had wasted every opportunity I had been offered, personal, educational, and professional. The world was moving on without me. I had reached my moment of despair.

One early morning during the Thanksgiving weekend, while I was tearfully drunk and despondent sitting on my ass outside of Coaches II, second guessing every mistake I ever made, a friend of mine from the Pre-Weekend Warm Up Club ("PWWC"), sat with me and convinced me that my life wasn't over and that I just had to change my perspective (thank you MaGoo a/k/a The Pie Man). For some reason, at that moment, that tiny bit of wisdom resonated. I decided to change course. I started to set goals.

I knew I didn't want to go it alone so I pursued a really nice (and very pretty) girl I had met that was from upstate New York. She would have nothing to do with me. I didn't blame her one bit. But I didn't give up. Over the next few months I showed up around her every day trying to impress upon her that I wasn't the same guy she rightfully thought that she knew. I demonstrated that I wasn't adrift anymore, that I had set goals.

The next year we were married. I had been working at a small computer processing company where I started as a messenger boy and worked my way up to running it, but my heart wasn't in it, and I knew I wanted something more. My dalliance with poetry and short stories made me believe I could be a writer, so I asked Lisa to believe in me as well and let me return to school, to study the great writers and maybe become one.

She rolled the dice with me and worked evenings at a job as a bookkeeper to support us while I went back to college. Given my academic history, and my general one for that matter, this was anything but a safe bet.

But I had set new goals, and two years later (did three years of credits in two) I graduated *magna cum laude*. And I had written *Revelations*.

But there was a new wrinkle in my plans. My first child arrived and suddenly the prospective life of a starving, passionate writer, no longer fit the bill. It was one thing to ask Lisa to take that risk, but

my baby hadn't been given the option to weigh in on that future. So I set a new goal.

Three years later I graduated from Fordham Law School.

My life since then has been four decades of a series of setting and accomplishing goals.

Now a quick aside. I am not a self-made man. My successes have many parents. People have stepped up and stepped in for me at just the right time to support me and help me accomplish these goals. Sometimes the goals have changed mid-stream, and I ended up with something different and often better than the goal I originally set. And I have had a few failures along the way, which only meant that I had to pick myself up and start over with new goals. That's just how the power of intention seems to work. You show the universe that you are focused on a goal, an outcome, an end-game, and it introduces the right people, opens the right doors and clears the right paths. No other way to explain it.

So since I moved out here to Colorado, I've set new goals. After I met Claire, my goal was to bring her into my life. The next goal was to write a novel. And then another. And then another.

My next goal is to transition The Claire Trilogy into a film or television series (while writing the prequel). I may not get there, but I have my eye on the prize.

So Lucian, my grandfatherly wish for you is that you continue to set your goals, and climb your mountains, the very highest ones, and then fly down them with the abandon of an angel on holiday. Never let anyone else dictate the outcome of your life. NEVER, EVER GIVE UP.

You other fine, five readers, set a goal today - big or small - and get after it.

And make this hump day a great one.

Find Your Herd

March 8, 2022



One of the greatest disasters that has arisen from the COVID Pandemic, is the destruction of our sense of community. The government closed churches, bars, restaurants, schools, offices and emptied parks and concert venues, anywhere we as humans gathered beyond our immediate blood family to exercise our collective rights.

For some individuals, lockdown meant total isolation.

But we are a communal race. We need to know that there are others out there to share in the human experience.

Back in the Bronx, I took community for granted. The McCaffrey homestead housed numerous members of the Clan, and there were always other members popping in. Riverdale had a familial sense to it, as most of us grew up together. I lived and worked in a City that

was a giant superhive of human interaction. On any given block in Manhattan you passed hundreds of other humans, thousands on one commute, and given the dictates of civility, you often interacted, if only briefly, when you held a door, pushed an elevator button for another or gave up your seat on a subway or bus. Those moments were the silent call signs shared by our species that showed we knew how to get along, even with the strangers among us. I believe that the forced isolation has impacted us all in different ways.

For example, sadly, I think that for some, isolation has dehumanized them to the point that they now look upon other humans as prey. I also think that isolation has tipped many of the more sensitive minds into the realm of psychosis. That could explain the marked increase and brutality of the crimes you now see perpetrated on the streets. Some no longer feel their connection to other human beings.

When I first moved out to Colorado, I suffered a diet cola version of that isolation. I was a complete stranger in my new community, and given that my wife left home everyday to work, I was left alone a good portion of each day. The silence is deafening. But my mind is a different sort of crazy. I allowed my imagination to create a community around me, first among the dogs and cat in the house, and then extended to the equines and other animals I met on my daily walks. And yes, I even talked to the trees and statuary. And let's not forget the Fae and ghosts. Finally, Claire and her series of consorts arrived. And I mixed in some of the characters from my past, the ones I knew so well that I could summon them before me like a genie, just by rubbing the mental lamp. Luckily, my experience with isolation turned into The Claire Trilogy. And that writing actually led to a creation of a local, NoCo community of writers and readers and friends. Of course there are the first among equals who were incorporated into the Trilogy, like Pam Ervin, Everette and Michelle, and Jimmy (and Kathy) Fronsdaahl.

But throughout this experience I did a lot of observing of these other, non-human, sentient creatures around me. For example, I often see Claire and Honey sharing a desire to herd beyond their familial bond with the local horses on some of the other properties. They all stand around, close to their boundaries, in clear sight and

in silent communication with each other, like telepathic neighbors over a backyard fence. They are acknowledging that there is something beyond the limits of their family home that makes them stronger through sharing.

I've listened when, at a time where all seems peaceful, how the bark of a distant dog starts a telephone chain of responsive barking throughout the area. Blue and Jeter will get up off the couch or bed and race outside to join in on the conversation, and after a few moments, they return to their spots, satisfied that they have shared in the greater pack experience. And I missed that.

Oddly enough, it was my writing that changed that.

While I was steeped in the middle of writing the Trilogy, I was contacted through my website by one of my close set of friends from my youth, Mike Augustyni ("Stein"). I hadn't seen or heard from Stein in decades. We exchanged some emails and he sent a few photos of some of the crew back then. Those old photos acted like a time machine and brought back memories of the most amazing times I shared in my youth.

Now one constant (remnant?) from my life as a misguided teenager was Mark Lenahan, whom I managed to stay in sporadic touch with over the years. He is a free spirit, a true character, who has done a decent amount of traveling over the years, but he always comes home to roost. You've seen me mention him a few times in my blogs. I had collected some newer best friends, like Helen Lalousis, who I stay in regular touch with, and through Helen, other great friends like Bobbi Allison and Kim Russo, from our shared interests in creative endeavors and the paranormal. But the others, the original crew, the ones that had survived our childhood together, had fallen off the face of the earth, because, like me, they had gotten on with their lives, their jobs, their families. Stein reaching out caused me to want to reconnect with the others that were such a central core of my formative years. And so I did, one at a time.

Now I share in a daily group text collective with some of that crew, like Joe Serrano, BC and now Peter ("Never Puffy") Smith which quickly devolves into a ball breaking session sprinkled with poignant moments of real sharing and caring. I call them the Old Fuckers Club. On a separate but related orbit circles Eileen Cotto (né Collins), who shared her bond with the original crew as a communal

little sister of one of the main characters of our youth, Denis ("Murray") Collins, who tragically passed almost forty-six years ago this month. Eileen is all heart and personality. A true universal force to be reckoned with. She may be the living embodiment of Mother Nature. And she isn't the only Collins that has re-entered the orbit, because that family are like synapses in a brain, always connected and always firing. When one sneezes they all simultaneously shout "God Bless You!" no matter where in the world they may be located. There are a million of them, like Star Trek Tribbles. They are an extension of my own family. Their parents, Momma C and Dutch, were instrumental in keeping me from going off the rails.

I even have a childhood character Karen "Cruiser" Anderson passing in and out of my NoCo solar system like an asteroid.

Always a trip. Hey Cruiser.

So, as I continued to create my imaginary community, I started to incorporate some of those - old and new - that made up my reconstituted actual community into that story. And I have come to realize, that without the different communities, past and present, that I have connected with over my lifetime, I could not have created Claire's community of misfits in my imagination. Nor could I have shared, through those characters' collective experiences, just how important the idea of family and community are to me. You just can't make that shit up.

And my writing has allowed me to strengthen my bonds with old writing friends like Colin Broderick and new writing friends like Christy Cooper-Burnett and Margaret Reyes Dempsey and Richard Lamb, and all of the others I've met in Writers Groups on Twitter. So, the rest of you, as you awaken from this Pandemic isolation, reach out and reassemble your ties to family and friends.

Reestablish your sense of humanity.

Find your herd.

Because when you reach my age, when members of your generation start to regularly cross the veil, you realize that you don't have forever to do so (at least not in your present form, but that's another story).

So, you fine, five readers, call that old friend, touch base and have a few laughs. And hug your family members whenever they are in reach. You'll be surprised at how good it will make you feel.

But no matter what you do today, make it a great one.

Cairo Goes Home - Duty Before Pleasure

March 7, 2022



Well the world travellers arrived safely from Sidney by way of San Francisco, and after Lisa & I got them safely back home from DIA, I had to walk Cairo over to see his family. It was not easy, because he truly enjoyed his stay at Casa Claire. (note for the record, that I believe that flipped left ear is some sort of doggy gang sign). Claire made an appearance to see him off.



I put on his vest and lead and Blue was not having any of it. She kept insisting that he either stay or that they both go. It was quite the emotional fairwell, and only concluded peacefully when I promised that he would come for a visit next weekend. Even Jeter tried to slip out of the door behind us and almost lost his tail for his trouble.



But, in protest, Blue wouldn't get off Cairo's bed, so I will have to take that over sometime today when she is not paying attention.



Cairo stopped three different times as we walked out of the driveway and kept looking back at the house. I had to keep appealing to his hard wired loyalty by telling him that his three little girls were waiting for him back at his house and needed his protection just to get him moving again.

He looked quite forelorn the entire walk, green mile level, no matter how much I tried to cheer him up. But when I opened the door of his home he heard the children inside and didn't even wait for me to take off his lead, he just bounded through the door in the direction of the family squeals, and didn't look back. He was home.

And that's how Cairo rolls. Always duty before pleasure.

I'd be lying if I didn't admit to just the tiniest tear in my eye as I closed the door behind him and turned back towards my house.

But I have another tiny tear now knowing that the weekend is over and a full week of legal work awaits me. But I'll take a page from Cairo's book. Duty before pleasure.

Before I leave the keyboards this morning, I need to give a shout out to my BIL Beau and my nephew Tyler who are on their respective roads to recovery. God's speed.

Now it's upstairs for a chilly kitty cuddle with Smokey (some more of that frigid Colorado temps to deal with) and then a quick spin through the morning circle.

And I've decided that it is really not fair of me to continuously castigate Monday every week for something that is beyond that poor day's control. So I will embrace this day for giving me yet another opportunity to show that I am not just a pretty face and demonstrate my legal chops to the world.

For the rest of you fine, five readers, make your own choices, but I say, let's give Monday a chance.

But no matter what, have a great day!

A Familial Booster

March 6, 2022



Yesterday, my daughter, Jackie, her man, Zack, and our grandson, Lucian (a name I lobbied for heavily because I was a big fan of the character from Underworld: <https://www.bing.com/search?FORM=SLBRDF&pc=SL17&q=Lucian%20the%20Werewolf>) came for a visit on route to their snowboarding vacation. Lucian is actually his middle name, but being baptised Episcopalian (almost a Catholic), he was able to employ the WASP practice of adopting it as his first. Plus Lucian pairs extremely well with his last name "Mattiace" pronounced like the French Impressionist, Henri Matisse. And he is artistic.



Once upon a time I wore my hair long just like Lucian. Oh how the mighty follicles have fallen.

Of course, as the oldest of his generation in the Clan ranking (he'll be ten this August), and therefore directly in line as a potential heir to the seat of power now held by the Fairy Godmothers, Lucian was granted an audience before Claire, and the two bonded over carrots and small talk. Claire told me to make myself useful and give her a good brushing so she would look presentable for the photos. I, of course, then circled the family sub-unit and grabbed some selfies.







As you can see, my family gets better looking with each generation. Of course I set a low bar, but I married well.

It was great to see them all, and despite having just complete 20 odd hours of straight driving from Georgia, they were upbeat and fun. They arrived with delicious baked goodies from the RISE Artesian Bread bakery here in Berthoud which were happily consumed by all over juice and coffee. Knowing that they were running on fumes and still had over two hours to drive through iffy weather and mountain passes to their final destination in Breckenridge, we didn't keep them too long, just a couple of hours. Held back the tears as we hugged our goodbyes and wished them *bon voyage*.

It was the perfect antidote for a rough week.

Their timing was perfect and gave Lisa and I the familial booster shot needed to carry us to the conclusion of our other set of grandchildren's five-week tour of Australia. They and their parents, Luke and Georgie, arrive back today. Of course, we are saddened that we will have to return their wonderful Mastiff, Cairo, who has been spending his staycation at Casa Claire with his cousins, Claire, Honey, Blue and Jeter. I'm sure he'll be thrilled to see his three little charges, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella. *Little Women* indeed.

Speaking of family, I'll close with a shout-out to my very lucky nephew, Tyler, Michele and Terry's son, who (as reported by my daughter who had been on the phone with him just before her arrival) survived a very bad motorcycle accident on Friday with just some broken bones, although he will need surgery to put him back together. Hopefully that horror will be the end to that branch of the florida family's misfortunes, as Terry not only lost the love of his life, Michele, just over a week ago, but his mother passed within days after. Tragedies come in threes, so let this be the end of it.

Time to light a candle.

Speaking of endings, this is a good spot to wrap this up, and move on with Smokey and my chores, which I must complete before heading out to DIA to retrieve the traveling wilburys.

But the rest of you fine, five readers, rest up for the week ahead, and hug the closest family member.

And, most of all, have a great day.

Books and Beverages and Lenahan

March 5, 2022



Anyone who has read The Claire Trilogy knows that its adult characters, human and other, are big fans of the libation *Macallan 12 Year Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky*. It is the alcohol beverage around which Claire's band of merry misfits come together and bond. It is the linament that - throughout their odyssey over the course of three books - greases their social wheels, rallies their celebrations, fortifies their determination, and soothes their broken hearts.

Growing up, there was always whisky in my Irish home. My father's favorite was Johnny Walker Red (and on rare occasion, JW Black). It was the adult mainstay of any extended family party or barbeque.

As I remember, whenever the elders of my Clan inevitably gathered their council in Posie's livingroom at some point during a larger family celebration to discuss serious family issues, there was usually whisky at hand. I was introduced to whisky as a child in its medicinal form - Hot Toddy. Not sure if it ever cured my ills but it certainly made me care less about them. I always looked forward to the first signs of a sore throat. Whisky on the gums was also the numbing agent of choice for mothers with teething children long before Anbesol or Orajel hit the market.

Now in full disclosure I have not had a drink of any alcohol since I was thirty years old. But I am not a member of the temperance set.

I am not against the consumption of alcohol. I do believe it is the nectar of the gods. But, as with anything so wonderously powerful, it must be handled in moderation and with responsibility. And I just realized at that point of my life that I wasn't really moderate or responsible enough to handle it. Enough said.

But, like many things I haven't done since before I was thirty, I still remember everything about the wonders of fine alcohol and its effects on the system. And so I can write about it with authenticity and appreciation.

In The Claire Trilogy, the fine Scotch, Macallan, is first introduced into the narrative by the extraterrestrial characters, Everett and Michelle, during their first private audience with Jimmy Moran during which many wonderful and mind-bending topics are shared.

Now as aliens that have been around humans for a very long time, they have developed an amazing love for their Terran charges. And while they are presented as an elevated evolution of the human

form, to a certain extent, they have "gone native." But in doing so, they also have learned to appreciate the finer things in human life. When it came to the selection of what alcoholic beverage an extraterrestrial might drink I gave it a lot of thought. I knew it had to be a top shelf item. I knew it had to be something shared during times of joy, sadness and the consideration of life and death issues. I knew it had to have mystical contemplative qualities. I knew it had to be whisky.

When it came to the selection of which top level whisky my characters would drink I did my research. First on-line and then through human polling. The brand Macallan kept hitting the sweet spot.

But I knew I had made the right choice when I ran it by the taste buds of my oldest and dearest friend Lenahan. As any reader of The Claire Trilogy will know, Lenahan is the character - the rogue US Marshall - that Jimmy literally trusts with his life. The real Lenahan is a member of the OFC, along with Joe S, BC and now, Pete (never Puffy) Smith (Stein is also a member in abstentia). I trust him with my life.



Lenahan and I have been friends since freshman year of high school (his hat makes reference to our mutual friend and Riverdale 9-11 hero, Tommy "Rocky" O'Hagan, RIP) We have had many adventures together, lived as flatmates at Aunt Violet's Flop House (with the incorrigible Joe Serrano) during our most formative years (which will be the primary fodder of *The Riverdale Chronicles*), and we have remained in close contact for five decades. He is a member of my Clan, known and loved by all of my family, living and dead. He knows all my darkest secrets. The photo below was taken at *An Beal Bocht* in the Bronx the night before I left New York.



We will never grow up. And I'm just fine with that. Professionally, Lenahan is a top flight chef who trained at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. He has worked at some of the most well known restaurants in New York

and beyond. I was terribly jealous that he got to live and work a few cool years down in Key West and also when he did a stint at the original Playboy Club. (He's also a brilliant writer - great short stories and poetry - and a fine actor - I hope he will push for the production of *Revelations* at ABB). But I digress.

Lenahan is a polymath and has the taste buds of a sommelier, which explains why he is such a brilliant chef (for anyone interested, he does private, in-home catering). If I want to know whether something is truly pleasurable to the palate, I ask Lenahan. I knew that if Lenahan enjoyed Macallan I had struck the bulls eye.

So I sent him a bottle. He loved it.

As did his character in *The Claire Trilogy*. Life imitating Art (or *vice versa*).

He was kind enough to send me the above conceptual photo. He's surprisingly photogenic. Could easily give "The Most Interesting Man In The World" a run for his money.

So anyway, this is the long back story (you all know how much I love a good back story) to the real purpose of this morning's blog, which is to mention an organization I crossed path with on the Twitter Writer's Group called "Books and Bevies" that is run by a young woman named Kerry F Freeman:



Now I'm not sure how this actually works, but it sounds like a brilliant idea. And since the characters in The Claire Trilogy have

such a strong bond with Macallan whisky, and the real Lenahan loves it, I figured I'd give this organization a try and see where it leads. I will keep you all posted. Talk about a shaggy dog story. Anyway, speaking of animals, I need to attend to Smokey and then my neighborhood equine and doggy charges and finally Claire & Honey, all before my daughter, Jackie, and her man, Zack, and my grandson Lucian, arrive later this morning for a short visit on their way to their skiing holiday in Breckenridge (the younger generations of my family have come a long way from sledding in Van Cortlandt Park, thanks to the Clan Leaders & Fairy Godmothers V&B). So I must get at it.

The rest of you fine, five readers, go do something fun, its the weekend.

And have a great day.

Nice Work If You Can Get It

March 4, 2022



The good news is that since I provided Claire the access to my life and property, I haven't needed to use the expensive John Deere riding lawnmower I purchased when I arrived out here - shortly after my failed attempt to scythe the front of my property.

Claire and Honey (and Mr. Rogers before that latter little devil arrived) manage to keep the back of the property well manicured.

So my John Deere is better put to use on my son's property down the road.

But after a tiring morning of grazing, the mules like to have their siesta, among the remnants of marsh grass - they knocked that down too - where my mystical pond stood until a year ago - it literally disappeared overnight, with the last of the snow, right after I finished writing KMAG. So Claire and Honey like to spend time in that area, and there is a spot towards its once center that is an open circle of silty dirt, that they love to roll in, usually right after a good brushing.



Now I know that equines can sleep on their feet, and do catnap like that in stops and starts overnight. But when they do they are smart about it. My pair always position themselves side by side, shoulder to shoulder with their tails backed against the widest side of Gepetto's studio, to protect their flanks as they face east, watching for the first signs of morning. That way, each one of them only has to protect two sides from potential nocturnal predators, the front and whatever side they are standing on in their pairing. Although Claire always takes the lead when they hear or see something that warrants an investigation. When Claire's dander is up, she starts to make this long deep snorting sound, like you would hear from a bull, and she breaks into a canter as she rapidly closes the distance towards anything that she has determined should not be on her property. Mules don't run from danger. They are like soldiers, firefighters and cops. And I'd be lying if I did not admit that I feel just a little bit safer knowing they are all out there at night. So, in the daylight, when the sun starts to warm the property, they both like to take a real nap, off their feet, close to the fence. I read somewhere that this is the only way mules can get real REM sleep. Sometimes Blue will go out and join them, keeping an eye on things while they snooze, as the designated driver so to speak.

That is how I take my mental breaks during the day. I look out my office window to see what the animals are up to. Like the other day, when Mr. Eagle stopped by for lunch, you never know what you are going to see out here in God's country.

Anyway, the title of this blog isn't referring to the chores that my mules carry out for me each and every day, but for the life I lead out here in my alternating professions of lawyer and writer. And those mules, especially Claire, have made that working life truly magical for me.

Well, Smokey awaits, so its time to put away my writer's hat, put on my lawyer's wig and tap into my New York office. But as long as I have these office windows to look out of at these wonderful creatures, I have the best jobs in the world.

It's Friday and you are going to have a great day without even trying.

So get started. The weekend awaits.

Is It Spring Yet? The Lonely Lounge Radio Show @ B-O-H

March 3, 2022



The weather finally got warm enough to remove the winter coats, so after a game of ringolevio yesterday morning, Lisa and I removed their winter wear, if only for a few days (its supposed to snow Monday - and has snowed around these parts as late as early June), which gave me a chance to give Claire a good brushing (Honey would have none of that) with the final kiss on her nose to let her know I had finished. Of course, I left the heaters going in the barn just in case it got too cold overnight. But it remained warm enough towards the evening to put their fruit & veggie dinners outside the barn.



Otherwise, I put the large black rubber bowls inside, if only to lure the mules in under the heaters for a little while to take the chill off them while they dine.

But Colorado weather teaches you that you have to grab opportunities when they appear. Of course, since the thaw brings the mud muck, both mules will soon look like Martin Sheen rising from the water in Apocalypse Now:

[https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=7Ud3uZPh&id=DC2A0F465335F62B8A87A803ED7D132C3EE362B4&thid=OIP.7Ud3uZPhhJWNJQ8yZ7u8bwHaDi&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cheatsheet.com%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2018%2f02%](https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=7Ud3uZPh&id=DC2A0F465335F62B8A87A803ED7D132C3EE362B4&thid=OIP.7Ud3uZPhhJWNJQ8yZ7u8bwHaDi&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cheatsheet.com%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2018%2f02%2f)

They love to roll in the muck. Thank God for Muck Boots.

Finally got to listen to my British Twitter friend Rosalind's radio show on her local [#LonelyLounge](#) show broadcasting from the Barton-On-Humber (England) -

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=0ID6VFNz&id=FD43EF9511A213C58F8EA7276ADBDAD8481F1EC&thid=OIP.0ID6VFNzi_1dDAiFQ3GU8gHaEI&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fth.bing.com%2fth%2fid%2fR.d080fa54

53738bfd5d0c0885437194f2%3frik%3d7PGBhN7a22onpw%26riu%3dhttp%253a%252f%252fwww.weather-forecast.com%25

- radio station that came on 3 p.m. Colorado time (5 p.m. for my east coast readers). The internet is a wonderful thing. You can catch the radio program on your computer Sun & Wed @ 9pm and Fri @ 4pm (B-O-H Time).

<https://player.playoutoneweb services.com/bartonfm>

It reminded me of those small indi-stations you came across on fm if you were traveling through rural areas by car in the 70s. Very little (beginning and end of show) chatter and a lot of uninterrupted interesting music I had not heard before.

B-O-H is one of those really quaint and old English towns that looks wonderful to live in:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports?view=detailV2&ccid=mCUbrjk0&id=E8F813B610D3DD188BDE58D40263DA3B1604D258&thid=OIP.mCUbrjk0GljJ9mv11->

[GuwwHaLH&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Ffarm5.staticflickr.com%2F4251%2F34825289480_aab700c29f_b.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.98251bae39341a58c9f66bf5d7e1aec3%3Frik%3DWNIEFjvaYwLUWA%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=1024&expw=682&q=barton+england&simid=608048914163436785&form=IRPRST&ck=4694375BC254B1C5EEF8E3B0D5EE2843&selectedindex=20&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11](https://www.halhi.com/mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Ffarm5.staticflickr.com%2F4251%2F34825289480_aab700c29f_b.jpg&cdnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fth.bing.com%2Fth%2Fid%2FR.98251bae39341a58c9f66bf5d7e1aec3%3Frik%3DWNIEFjvaYwLUWA%26pid%3DImgRaw%26r%3D0&exph=1024&expw=682&q=barton+england&simid=608048914163436785&form=IRPRST&ck=4694375BC254B1C5EEF8E3B0D5EE2843&selectedindex=20&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0&vt=0&sim=11)

The LL radio show provided a great background atmosphere while I finished up my legal work day. Thank you Rosalind.

I can be found giving cheeky responses during the early morning hours to interesting questions posed by other members of the Writers Group on Twitter @wisecelt. They are a wonderful and supportive group of people. I want every one of them to succeed.

Well, it is Thursday, that means my recycling must be collected and put out to the roadside, and I still have to cuddle and feed Smokey, so I must flee.

The rest of your fine, five readers, put your heads down and push on through work until Friday, when everything worthwhile in life begins to happen all over again.

While you are at it, have a great day.

All The World's A Stage

March 2, 2022



Snapped this photo of a cool statue of *Jacques* from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. His character was famous for his Seven Stages of Man Soliloquy:

"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances. . ." which is the first line from that speech, is inscribed in the cement block below the statue.

I believe the photo was taken in 2017 at the Benson Sculpture Garden in Loveland, Co, which is just north of my little town of Berthoud. Lisa and I had only been here a short while and my

daughter, Jackie, and grandson, Lucian (also a character in The Claire Trilogy), came for a visit and we wanted to do something fun with him. This photo was fun for me, for as most of my fine, five readers will know, I am a big fan of The Bard.

What made me think of Jaques, and his speech, was the recent death of my SIL, Michele, who made her last exit from this Playhouse, stage right, with class and nobility. She played her parts of daughter, sister, wife, mother, aunty and friend wonderfully, Tony Award level, but only through the Sixth Stage, where most of my generation now inhabits. And to be honest, who is looking forward to the Seventh Stage anyway?

But the play goes on, and the rest of us actors continue to play our roles.

Speaking of Shakespeare, on a lighter note, yesterday I received my email reminder from Colorado University at Boulder to purchase my earlybird tickets to one of the performances of this Summer's Shakespeare Series. While I may still book tickets to one of the Bard's offerings - "**The Two Gentlemen of Verona**," "**All's Well That Ends Well**," and "**Coriolanus**" - I decided to go with "*The Book of Will*," a play by Lauren Gunderson that premiered at the Denver Center in 2017, which tells the true story of Shakespeare's friends as they work to publish his plays posthumously. A quote from the director on the CU website describes the play as "a 'love letter' to all theatre folk, actors and audiences alike." I find that fascinating. I love a great backstory, which is why I so enjoyed the CBC's series *Slings and Arrows* - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slings %26 Arrows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slings_%26_Arrows) - and also the BBC's series *Upstart Crow* - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upstart Crow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upstart_Crow). I highly recommend both series to anyone looking for a humorous education into the backstory of the writings and performances of WS.

I also lined up my tickets for *Nunsense*, playing now at the Longmont Theatre. Thank you Greg Shumann. Looking forward to some musical comedy.

Anyway, I cannot wait to attend both performances.

Changing gears, I received the most wonderful Tweet late yesterday, by one of my Twitter friends:

semopt@semopt

Omg omg! My friend is a little past halfway through this part 2 of the trilogy and I can't wait till she's finished!!!! @wisecelt !!!!! 😊

Feeling happy and privileged!!!! 🙌

Below it was a copy of the book cover from AAA.

<https://twitter.com/semopt/status/1498826474241024003?s=10>

I retweeted the post and publicly thanked semopt for it. And semopt quickly responded - speaking of TWA:

Tom- I really wish you the best of luck! I really enjoyed your book and thought it was a really fine idea and I liked all.... LOVED all the different aspects. The mob, the witness protection program, the %^+=s, the donkey (mule w/e) and all the other stuff I don't wanna spoil!!! "*

<https://twitter.com/semopt/status/1498868085109006336>

As much as I love reading great reviews on Amazon, it is really nice to see one that I can actually interact with on Twitter. People just don't realize how important and nice it is to receive a positive response to your own writing. Twitter allows me to tell the person that makes the effort just that.

I hope semopt enjoys AAA just as much, and finishes it in time to read the final (?) installment of The Claire Trilogy, *Kissing My Ass Goodbye*, which drops in three weeks. Thank you again, semopt. Speaking of the roles the players must play, I must return to my performance as attorney. Before that happens I have cat cuddles to share and a trip around the neighborhood.

And I must give it my all, because one never knows if today is your last performance.

So you fine, five readers get over the hump, you can spot Friday from its peak.

But most of all, have a great day!

PS: Speaking of life being stranger than fiction, received word late yesterday that Carl LeFong, the pseudonym for a charter member of the OFC and the real life basis for one of the characters in K MAG, has an honest to god stalker. Be careful out there CL.

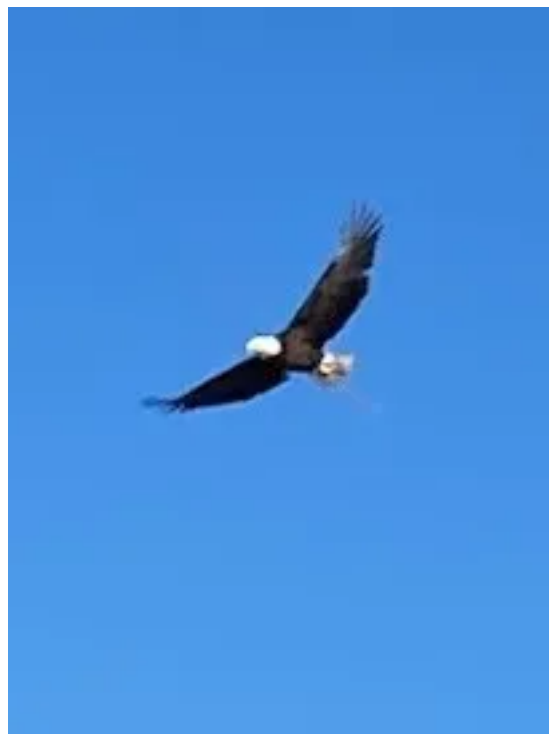
PPS: Speaking of K MAG characters, my BIL Beau (the basis for one of the main bad guys - with his real twin Victor) is recovering nicely from surgery on Monday. If you could read the offensive and

irreverent texts we shared yesterday, you would see that Beau is well on his way to a full recovery. Godspeed Beau!

When You Look, You See Amazing Things

March 1, 2022

Yesterday afternoon, while I was pondering how to cut a 50 page legal brief down to 25 pages (a great exercise for any writer), I looked out my office window and spotted a beautiful young adult Bald Eagle circling my property.



Turns out he had killed a large rabbit in the lowland area of my back property where my pond used to sit. The thing was that both Blue and my mules were out back at the time of his hunting, so they kept pestering the eagle everytime he landed to eat his meal.

First it was Blue, my black Bronx pitty (yes, from TCT), chasing the poor bird whenever it landed



Of course it flew right over Honey's head, when she came over to see what Blue and the eagle were up to.



And that close call to her little sister brought Claire over, and then it was the Mules who got territorial (they are known to be great watch animals) after I called Blue in the house, forcing the poor eagle to have to drag his very large rabbit in short hops across my property

and, finally, with a major effort, over the fence and into my neighbor's property.



When Claire dips her head like that she has zoomed in on something she is about to send packing. She keeps the predators away. I like that Honey is Claire's wing-mule in all situations.

When it was all said and done, I was glad the eagle got to keep his meal, given that he had worked so hard to get it, and Blue would have certainly eaten the dead rabbit and then puked it up inside my house if the eagle left it behind. But I am glad that Blue and Claire & Honey are on the job, because I want the eagle to be wary of hunting for large rabbit size prey on my property, given that I have a really slow Jeter wandering free range at times in my back yard. But most of all, I was glad I got to witness the event. Never saw the likes of this in the Bronx.

Anyway, I got the legal brief down to 25 pages and, like the eagle (and my trilogy), its a killer.

But I still have lots to do on this motion before next Friday, so I better get at it.

First, a stop upstairs for a cuddle with Smokey.

But you fine, five readers keep your eyes peeled, or you'll never know what you may be missing.

While you are at it, have a magnificent day!

