



The Taylor Times



The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"

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PAY CASH FOR CLIMATE... GET CLIMATE CHANGE

The approach of winter was peculiarly mild and dry this year. Few complained, but the portend of heat and drought for next year looms ominously. Rain and wind usually begin moving in near the beginning of October, taking with them the short-lived potential for the beautiful fall colors found in so many other parts of the country, but in this El Niño season there was much more to enjoy in the Northwest and in much more comfortable temperatures than in many previous years... perhaps one of the few positive results of our increasingly unsettled climate.

For us, 2018 was pleasant, but busy from start to finish. After the Eastside Symphony's March concert, which I had to miss in order to attend

the Northwest Symphony's performance of "I Come In Peace," rehearsals began for the May concert which would include my recently completed tone poem, "Conjunction: Return to the Planets." Before that performance occurred, around mid-April, I had already set to work on new music for piano, strings, and timpani called "Ambrosia Fantasy". While it was intended to have something of a New Age feel it pretty much rapidly settled into my usual classical style, though growing in the process and ultimately ending up some 21 minutes in length, a mini concerto of sorts. It was completed in early August initiating the search for a pianist with whom we can perform it, (still looking.)



Dinner at the Bay Breeze in Birch Bay

As scheduled, "Conjunction" was premiered in May by Eastside, to many pleasant compliments, especially from the local planets in attendance.

Shortly after Ambrosia was finished I started work on yet another new suite for brass band, "Elements", which will musically describe six elements from the periodic table. I know, sounds weird, but it actually seems to work. Helium is completed as of this writing. The other elements should soon follow (if they can keep from laughing at Helium's squeaky voice.) It could be very interesting, but needless to say, don't expect the entire periodic table to be represented! That could be a chemical disaster and cause an unpredictable audience reaction!

Very early in the year, if not before, I had decided that I was going to forego ALL summer performances with Brass Band Northwest, the only one of my ensembles that extends well

into the sunshine months. Too many rehearsals and too many performances throughout the regular season, while still trying to work 40 hour weeks in engineering and keep the peace at home, has always been extremely problematic, as well as tending to leave me significantly short on sleep and quite cranky.

One major thing taking the summer off did was allow Donna and me to vacation without concern for musical obligations (only engineering obligations.) In late July, we spent a week in Birch Bay, during which time we made our annual pilgrimage to Boxx Berry Farm, this time harvesting some 20 lbs of blueberries. Speaking of berry picking, the raspberries in the alley behind the house, that I have tended since discovering them the summer after moving here, yielded about 10 lbs, despite those wanderers through the alley that just couldn't resist the temptation to do some



Low tide in the shallows of Willapa Bay, Long Beach, Washington

gathering of their own.

While there were again no major trips this year, twice we went down to Long Beach, WA, for the week, once in mid August, shortly after Birch Bay, then again at the end of September. We enjoy that area so much that we've given some thought to selling the house in Desert Hot Springs and buying something in Long Beach, but we need to establish the California house as a primary personal residence first in order to minimize capital gains tax, something that requires at least three years to do, so who knows, after living there for awhile we may change our minds (uh, not according to Donna.) I'm not yet retired (though as you may have noted from previous newsletters, inching closer and closer... yes, the Seattle house is now paid off, too! Yipee!), so it remains to be seen. Of course, it would also mean having to decide which is riskier, tsunamis or earthquakes!

I have instructed the manager of the house in Desert Hot Springs, to marginally raise the rent as of January 1 and at the same time to inform the tenants that they will need to be out at the end of 2019, allowing me to move into it, at least on a part-time basis. This may actually let me get the furniture out of the garage that's been sitting there for years and straighten things up. What!? Me clean?!



Moonrise in July at Birch Bay

We are now in the heart of the 2018-2019 music season. With fall and Holiday concerts behind us there is always a brief lull before rehearsals begin again in January. Thanksgiving was spent at home enjoying a simple home-cooked meal and watching a movie in front of the fireplace. Christmas will likely be spent the same way. With the weather in December finally starting to act a little more like wet season in the Great Northwest, snuggling on a stormy night can be a wonderful use of time, at least as long as the power doesn't go out. Well, maybe even if the power DOES go out.

OTHER ODDS AND ENDS

In November, Donna and I celebrated our 9th anniversary. It certainly has been a winding road, but full of adventures. With the house now paid off and the car on the cusp of the same, there may yet be new adventures ahead.



A Blue Heron on the banks of the Green River, extended summer, outside the back door of my office building.

THE COOKED BOOKS or The book reports I never wrote in grade school!

NON-FICTION:

Madeleine Albright: Fascism: A Warning. Albright takes us through the fascist regimes of the last and current centuries, with a particular emphasis on what led up to them and how they compare to our current political atmosphere.

James Comey: A Higher Loyalty. While it may never be wise to trust someone just because they appear trustworthy, if the claims they make can be verified and put into proper context it is usually a safe bet that trust is justified. Comey demonstrates that with this book.

Bob Woodward: Fear, Trump in the White House. I'm not keen on Woodward's writing style. It seemed like his presentation was little more than a formalization and organization of notes he had assembled in various files. Nevertheless, what he has to tell us of

the current administration is quite disconcerting, if not downright scary... hence the title.

FICTION:

Dan Brown: Inferno. With the passing of Michael Creighton, Dan Brown has replaced him on my list of favorite living authors. Brown is the master of the "chase" in conjunction with puzzle solving. This work, with significant reference to Dante and his classic Inferno, provides a well researched ride through Florence, Venice, and Istanbul. I'm very glad I read this and Dante's poem in the proper order and before seeing the film. While I have to give Ron Howard kudos for his handling of this very detailed story, it did deviate from the book in ways that were somewhat disappointing.

Dan Brown: Origin. The latest Robert Langford adventure takes its chase through Spain, from Bilbao to Barcelona, Seville to Madrid, as Langford tries to uncover his friend's earthshaking discovery.



Wishing peace and happiness to all for the Holidays and the New Year!

Jeff and Donna



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