

## 2006: The year the signifying monkey met Alvin and the Chipmunks

The year, 2006, started out righteous enough. A few months earlier a friend and I had built a sweat lodge over by the garden to use as the winter lodge. I started out the New Year with a solo sweat lodge ceremony while Maggie remained inside listening to seasonal sounds on the audio system and working on a craft project. We had picked up some CD's from the store a month earlier and one that she enjoyed the most was "Alvin and the Chipmunks". It amused me that she enjoyed some of the same songs I had listened to as a child. They sounded like the same songs that had been on an LP my parents bought when I was a young boy. "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth" had come out the same year I had lost my two front teeth, but the replacements had taken forever to come in, so I went for almost a year without them. It was a song I could sing along to with sincerity back then.

Dad came to stay with us a week or so later in the month. It was a mild winter so far, so we got to spend some time outside. He enjoyed helping me split firewood with my new wood splitter. He kept trying to tell me what to do like I was ten years old all over again. I could indulge him part of the time but when he started getting reckless and I was concerned that he might hurt himself or me, I had to overstep that role and be the responsible person. One of the reasons I had agreed to keep him for this week was because my sister, Laura M, was laid off from work for a few months and had said that she would go in and deal with some of Mommy's things while dad was out of the house. I asked her later if she was able to take care of the things she had said she would and she gave me a vague answer. A few years later I found out that all she wanted dad out of the way for was to remove his guns while he was with me. One of the guns she removed was the one granddad had given me that I had left with dad while going through the divorce from Maggie's mother over the past few years. I didn't learn any of this during January, 2006. At the time all I learned was that my sister had lied to me about her intentions.

During that week I had watched dad's blood sugar come down from an unhealthy level to near normal levels while eating properly. I had been telling my sister that I didn't think dad had a serious issue with diabetes as long as he controlled it with diet and exercise. Her bone of contention was that dad wanted junk food and the doctor said he wouldn't die of malnutrition, so it was her duty to buy him junk food. It was an argument I wasn't going to win, so I enjoyed the week with dad and let that part go. One of the things I had hoped dad would do was tell Maggie some stories of what life had been like for him as a young boy growing up in Sevier County, Tennessee. He picked the worst stories I've ever heard him tell to relate to her. The straw that broke the camel's back was when he told about his puppy dog that ended up being "put down". His dad had told him to stop taking it to school with him when he walked to school but he insisted on doing so. There was a pack of wild dogs near the school that his dog would go and hang out with while he was in school. His dad was afraid it would get rabies from them. One day his dad caught him taking the dog to school with him and his dad chopped its head off with an ax when he got home from school. Dad insisted on telling this story right before supper. I wasn't sure which story he was telling, but I hoped it wasn't this one. Before I could stop him the harsh part came out. Maggie couldn't eat supper after that. Later I thanked him for telling his stories about his youth, but I didn't think Maggie was getting that much out of it.

Somewhere in the middle of all of this I had a dream about art. A lot of inspiration for my work has come from dreams throughout my career and I found this one to be very interesting. On January 12 while awake, I had been thinking about doing a figurative sketch in a drawing pad during the day. That night I had a dream where I was in an art class and was getting my materials out. At first I was confused to find that I didn't have my usual sketch book that I use now, but had a much smaller one that was about 5 x 7 inches. As I set up to start to work, the sketch that I had imagined myself doing earlier that day fell out of the sketch book. The instructor came up and said that I should continue working in this direction some more. I started working on a new sketch. I don't remember if there was a model or how I was coming up with the subject matter, but it was also a female bust image. He came over and asked if he could show me something. As he started to draw on the piece, the marks he left looked like he was using an ink pen or brush with gold liquid on my black marks (I don't recall if I was using ink, charcoal, or pencil). He was working along the edges of the arms and so forth, so they had a distinct glow or reflection. What he said while he worked on the drawing was most interesting. "You should chisel your edges like this." I commented that I also did wood carving and he just looked at me like "Duh!" and then moved on to another student. I woke up from the dream and remembered the image. As soon as possible I did a drawing entitled "Chisel the Edges".

I timed returning dad home with picking up Diane G at the Knoxville airport so I could save on gas money. I had completed an art commission a few months earlier and gotten paid for it a few weeks late, but the budget had held up for several months. Now the accounts were getting low. While staying with a friend the year before during the most difficult part of the divorce, I had the insight that someone was going to come and ask me for help with HIV. As a young boy I had spent many days walking through the woods with granddad while he taught me ways to use plants and other resources from nature to heal others. At times he would stop and look at me for a minute, and then say, "I don't know why I'm teaching you all this stuff. You won't be able to use any of it." As he passed on the family information that had been handed down for untold generations, he had no idea that President Carter would sign the Native American Religious Freedom Act in 1978 and make it legal to be "Indian" again. After the insight of someone coming to ask me to help them with HIV in April, 2005, I had been working to get back onto the land where all my dreams had indicated I was to continue the indigenous work of my ancestors. I had sold enough art to pay Maggie's mother a settlement and with a notarized contractual statement from Kevin C to buy \$50,000.00 worth of art over the next two years, I had proof of income for several years in the future, so I was able to take over the mortgage and get the property in my name. I had invested everything I had to get ready for this moment in time. I was ready to respond when Diane G offered me tobacco and asked me to help her with HIV.

I had been given in insight into how to address HIV when all the dreams and insights started back in 1987. As I drove past a section of National Forest that had been logged one day I heard a quiet still voice tell me the connection between the trees in the forest and the virus that was causing the AIDS epidemic. For most of my life I didn't want to talk about hearing these quiet still voices because I didn't know the difference between this and someone hearing voices in their head as part of psychotic episodes. Years later I understood the difference. I have a choice as to whether to use this

information or not. The voice doesn't tell me what to do. It just provides insights. Given the time between the first insight and the opportunity to use it, I had to pray a lot about how to use this information before Diane got here. I knew I needed to say a certain prayer and collect leaves from a conifer for tea, but I didn't know if that was enough. The insights suggested that I make a powder of processed sap to use on the hot rocks at the start of the sweat lodge ceremony as well. I tried it and found that it helped for a lot of things, so that was good. I was ready.

One of the things that I asked Diane to bring me from Africa was something from the monkey. I had asked her via e-mail if the natives used monkey in their diet and she had responded that they didn't. The area where she had been working for several years had been going through some climate changes and food was an increasing concern, as well as the spread of HIV. Later she changed the response to indicate that monkey was part of the diet and that she had probably eaten monkey while out in the bush on field trips and wasn't aware of it. I had suspected that she had contracted HIV through her diet since none of the "normal" channels matched her situation. She brought me monkey hair from an orphaned monkey that some friends were raising until it was old enough to release back into the wild. As it turned out, it was probably orphaned when its mother had been shot for food. After Diane offered me tobacco and asked for help via the Old Ways as handed down to me by my grandparents, I started the final preparations for doing four sweat lodge ceremonies over the next four days.

Over the years since my grandparents had passed on I had continued to learn as much as I could about Native American culture in general. One of the things I found was a wealth of stories from the oral traditions from hundreds of tribal nations that were still being told and preserved today. Many of these stories provided insight into a world that was still around but fading behind a mirage of discount retail outlet parking lots and power lines. I absorbed these stories like a sponge. One of them came from a tribe in the north. As I recall, credit is given to the Abenaki People of Vermont for this one, but each story is considered an entity in its own right. No people or person owns a story in the Old Ways. The stories give us life and we return this gift by giving each story new life with each telling. The story goes like this.

"In the beginning of time the Creator of All Things worked to create a place of beauty where all things could reside in harmony and balance. After creating this world we live in today, the Creator wanted someone to share this world with, so humans were created. In the beginning of this shared world things went well, but after a time things started to get out of balance. Humans had the ability to function through free will unlike many other creatures. We started to take too much of what was available without giving back. This was causing a lot of problems amongst the animals who were the providers of food to the humans through the sacrifice of their bodies. Finally things had gone too far and a great Council of All Animals was called to address this situation. The Universe was created in the spirit of harmony and balance, but humans were not following this way, so a new agreement needed to be instilled to bring harmony and balance back between all parties concerned. After all the animals had gathered and counseled on the information provided and the options presented that would assist in bringing back balance, it was agreed upon by all present that each animal would choose a disease that would be inflicted upon the humans that failed to follow the spirit of the Universe with respect to harmony and balance.

In a general fashion, a hunter would normally offer prayers to the Universe and ask that an animal come forward and offer its body in sacrifice so that his family and village could have food to eat. Having satisfied this spiritual ritual before going out to hunt, the hunter would seek wild game and take only as much as was needed. Before removing the game from where it had fallen, he would make an offering to the animal by placing corn meal (or something similar) in its mouth. He would say a prayer of gratitude to show respect to the animal for giving its life so his people could live. In this way harmony and balance should have been the order of the day, but humans got greedy and in a hurry sometimes. We took too much and failed to ask first or give thanks afterwards. Should we fail to do this in the future, after this new agreement went into affect, eating the remains of an improperly hunted animal would cause us to get a sickness from it. As they went around the Circle, each animal chose a disease. When it came to the chipmunk, the pair present refused to pick a disease. They related that they were in agreement with respect to all other animals, but in their case, they were too small and fast for the humans. Since it was too much trouble to hunt or trap them and there wasn't enough meat to make it worth the while, humans didn't consider them a food source. At their refusal to join with all the other animals in choosing a disease, the bear sitting next to them got very angry. He tried to smack the chipmunk, but the chipmunk saw it coming and jumped out of the way. All the bear was able to do was graze the back of the chipmunk with two claws. The scars from this injury healed leaving two white marks on either side of the chipmunks back. This is how the chipmunk got its white marks on its back. They remain there today to remind humans of the agreement we have with the Universe and all our relations. Hunters are supposed to show respect by asking for help before going on a hunt, taking only as much as is needed, and offering a prayer of thanks afterwards. If we fail to do this, we will consume the meat of the animal and get the disease associated with it. That is the way it has been ever since this Great Council gathered not so long after the Creator of All Things placed us here in the world to share in its beauty. A lot of sickness prevails today because we no longer honor this agreement. Such is the way of harmony and balance in a world of beauty."

Each time someone asks for help with a disease, the person being asked would need to consider the disease and if there is any relationship between it and an animal as related to this story. As I considered the relationship between HIV and the monkey of Africa, I prepared a prayer stick that included the monkey hair Diane brought with her. This was a stick with a fork at the smaller end. I tied a prayer tie on one end of the two forks and a small feather on the other end. This feather had fallen from the sky one day a few weeks earlier while I had been meditating and praying about what I would need in order to do this ritual. A pattern had started several years earlier where the birds around in the trees would suddenly get very quiet. Sometimes I would step out and watch an eagle soar overhead a few minutes later. As it went out of sight the birds would start up their chatter of the day again. On several occasions I would notice a small feather falling nearby soon after this happened. It was usually a few days before I was to do an important ritual and this feather would be used in the proper manner and then offered to the fire at the end of the ritual. I tied such a feather to the other fork of this stick with artificial sinew, a nylon cord coated with bee's wax that made a very tight bond between the object being tied and the wood. I tied the monkey hair to the staff of the stick half way down between the fork and the point at the end.

Diane worked for an Italian relief organization helping provide agricultural assistance to the people of the African country where she lived and worked throughout much of the year. She had taken this job soon after being estranged from her Italian husband whom she had met over a decade earlier in New York City. He had been the one to contact me the previous year about the need for Diane to come and ask for help. Since I couldn't charge for my efforts in this matter, I had explained to both of them the need to provide some financial assistance in other ways. I couldn't charge for ceremony but I could sell my art work. They had expressed an understanding of the situation and offered a verbal agreement to purchase art so I could focus as much time as needed to preparing for this important event. When Diane arrived at my home I had intended to give her a few days to rest and adjust to the climate change after flying from her holiday ski vacation with family in Breckenridge CO. It was January and there were a lot of things that needed to be done to take care of the place, so it was with some surprise that I discovered that I would need to spend most of the time relating relevant information about the process such as the Council of Animals and the relationship between monkey and HIV to Diane. From some of her questions it seemed like she was more interested in my personal/marital history, which I viewed as trust issues and tried to respond to as decorous as possible. I had to go through a lot of explanations to prepare her for this process. For someone who had traveled throughout the world with her father, who had been a commander of US Naval bases before retiring from the military, as well as her personal travels with her husband related to his work as a nature photographer, and her own work, she had very little knowledge or understanding of tribal culture. On the day the first sweat lodge was supposed to be done, I was still explaining things to her as the fire keeper for the first two rituals pulled up next to the house.

One of the things that Diane agreed to do as part of the two way exchange between her self and "spirit" was to provide as much information of the events about to take place to the people of Africa to help alleviate the spread of HIV amongst tribal populations. This would include reminding them of the need to honor the code of the hunter when hunting wild game, the need to properly prepare monkey when using it for dietary needs, and the process of gathering and preparing the tea I would be giving her during the rituals to help treat those with HIV back in the land she would be returning to. Diane readily agreed to all of this as part of her expression of gratitude. Feeling that all was in place, I proceeded into the four rituals over the next four days with the continuing sense of inadequacy. I did not grow up on an Indian reservation. I knew a little of my indigenous language but I wasn't fluent in it. There were a long list of reasons why I felt I wasn't the right person for the job, but I was willing to do my best and pray that good things would come of it in spite of my human shortcomings.

During one of the first two rituals I had the strong sense that a monkey was playing in the top of the lodge like it was playing with monkey bars in a playground. As I looked up to see if there was a visual impression to go with this, I had the impression that something with two small white markings on its back ran around the other side of the sweat lodge. As I saw nothing in my direct view, I continued to sing and create steam. A sound like Alvin and the Chipmunks singing along with us came from the space a few feet in front of me. It was like the signifying monkey was pointing at the real culprit. I adjusted my dentures and kept on singing.

During the third ritual on a cold rainy Saturday night in January, 2006, I had the distinct impression that I could smell someone's hair burning. I checked with everyone in the lodge to make sure they were not in danger of this happening. At the end of the ritual I pulled the prayer stick from where I had it stuck in the ground near my right foot and stepped out of the lodge. I looked down at the stick and saw something was amiss. The feather wasn't on the upper fork where it had been tied, but the artificial sinew I had tied it on with was still there. The prayer tie was the same as it had been. I looked down on the shaft of the stick where I had tied the monkey hair and found the hair missing, but the eagle fluff was there instead. I tugged on the fluff a little and it was tightly bound in the artificial sinew. I showed this to everyone present so they could witness what had happened before putting the stick away for the day. The next day after completing the last ritual I offered the stick to the fire.

Diane stayed until the end of the week making her stay a total of two weeks. Her estranged husband had promised to fly in after crossing the Atlantic in his recently purchased 47 foot sailboat to join us and assist in the work of doing the four rituals. He had postponed purchasing any art work until after he completed the purchase of the sailboat. He called from the Caribbean Islands he had arrived at a few days earlier to notify Diane that he wouldn't be there in time to assist with the rituals. When everything was completed he called again to notify Diane that he wouldn't be coming then or at any other time in the future to purchase any art work. He had provided a small gift the spring before to help in getting things going and later the following year I shipped a small work of art from my collection to provide a token effort at honoring this commitment so it wouldn't hamper any of healing work Diane had embarked upon within her self. The artist from whose work I selected had died of HIV fifteen years earlier. The painting appeared like a self-portrait of him in the sweat lodge while doing a ritual for his own healing. It seemed appropriate enough. Diane purchased a few small watercolor paintings that she would pack and travel easily with on her return trip back to Africa to continue her work there. Soon after she arrived in Africa her communication indicated to me that she had no intentions of assisting the people there with any of the information she had been given during her stay with me. She related that there were no conifers in the country where she resided that could be used to make "medicine" from, although there were thousands of hectares of pulp wood trees being grown in the countryside near the town where she lived. Her blood work showed that her numbers remained steady before returning to near normal levels over the next three years so she never had to seek treatment for HIV. That was the only positive news in this sad turn of events.

A week or so after Diane flew off to Boston and returned to her parent's home on Cape Cod; I had another dream about art. I was looking at a display of wood sculpture in the New York City Main Library. The critical eye of the artist reviewed each piece like I was going to be writing a review of the show. It wasn't going to be a very positive review throughout the dream. When I awakened and remembered the dream, I reflected back on each piece and what it suggested to me. I ignored the art school attitude I had taken on during the dream. It was the view-point of one professor that had very little interest in anything natural. His works of stainless-steel sculptures looked like something from an alien world without the influence of anything human. It was as though I had viewed these works through his eyes. I focused on getting through the rest of the coldest part of winter before starting on a series of works that would reflect the information I had gleaned from

this dream. I wrote a short essay on this for the work after completing a number of pieces and sending off promotional slides of them to galleries and potential patrons later in the year. The essay was later posted on the web site promoting my art work. Getting through February came first.

At the first of the month (February 1, 2006) I sent out a newsletter via e-mail to a number of friends. The title of the piece was called "The Pre-Ground Hog Day Meditation. It reads as follows.

As the sun comes up over the ridge and reflects off the frost on the trees, I am reminded of a poem I read many years ago. This was back in my teen years when I was reading anything that I could get my hands on about how to write poetry. The poem was being used to illustrate how one might use descriptive verse to describe a scene in nature. I remember the poem described a winter scene much like the one I am seeing today. The poet was living somewhere in Kentucky at the time. I think it was Edgar Allen Poe, but I can't remember for sure. One of these days I'll have to look that poem up and see if memory still serves me well. (My children better get used to this memory issue, as I don't anticipate it getting any better as I get older.) Winter is a time for inward contemplation and retreat. It is a time to reflect back and see where we've been and use this as an indication of where we are going. (For those living south of the equator that are receiving this, you know what to do already. The mangos are almost out of season and the kiwis are looking good.)

Meanwhile, back in the "States", we are getting ready for the most strange of events.

<http://www.groundhog.org/>

Every three months starting with Winter Solstice, there is another mark in time through the year. Halfway in between each of the solstices or equinoxes, there are four other events that help us mark time. Today folks around here observe Groundhog Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. I have no idea how People in other parts of the world mark time on this day. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, we give a passing nod to May Day and the May Pole Dance. I am told that it was once a major ritual similar to the Sun Dance ritual that is observed by the Native Americans who were primarily of the Plains region of North America between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River and points north and south of these two major land marks. During my visit to some of the Stone Circles in England in 1996, I could certainly consider this similarity. Images of young women holding ribbons that are tied to the May Pole continue to reflect back on the beauty of fertility rituals that were an important aspect of tribal cultures around the world. (To give a nod back to Groundhog Day and where it lies in the scheme of things as the New Year develops, I suppose Valentine's Day is there for those that "didn't get it" two weeks earlier.) While Halloween is the final ritual in the four dates, this one being a Druid event that honored the Grandmothers in the village back before Christianity wielded fear and salvation to disempower women, I don't know of any name for the one that would fall on August 1<sup>st</sup>, or thereabout. The closest reference I know is "Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare. (I skipped several other dates that come along in the spring in this chronology. The Ides of March is important in the greater scheme of things, which is reflected in the naming of several

works of art I've done over the years. Saint Patrick's Day is another marker in the fertility rites as the ending date to plant the early spring plants. I know the Catholic Church gave the Irish another reason to celebrate, but I never could take to green beer myself, so I'll move on past that part of human culture ever so slowly.)

Meanwhile, the day thickens and it is time to get to the point and get done. January was a busy month for us here in Pumpkin Valley. The last two weeks (give or take a few days) was marked with a visit from Diane G. She honored this time and place by coming to ask for help in addressing some challenges in her life that are best told by her in her own time. The past year was spent in preparation for this visit. As the intensity and focus begin to consume my energies, I let some of the usual things I do slide for a bit. Yes, I will send in the overdue electric bill before they come and turn it off, I hope. I intend to anyway. As major events like Diane's visit make their mark on my life, I reflect back over this personal history and marvel at how life has brought me here. I am grateful for all the support that was given during the past year, in particular to friends like Russ W, Kevin C, Melora D and Rick F. I can't forget John K either. I've known him longer than anyone else on my mailing list, over 19 years and counting. If I ever need a village idiot, he's hired without an interview. (Village idiots were no laughing matter back in the day, you know.) When the chips are down and the challenge seems insurmountable, it's friends like these that give hope and make it all possible on the human level. Of course, the Great Mystery gets credit also, but when we need to put a face on this beauty, it's those that show up during the darkest moments of our lives that we honor later. Thank you.

Yesterday morning I was sitting by the wood stove listening to the draft whistling in to feed the fire when I thought of a poem I needed to write. As half of winter rolls past on the calendar, it's a good time to reflect back and appreciate all that life has given me along the way. Keep a poem in your heart and enjoy the beauty and mystery of each day wherever you are. Yes.

Oliver!

Fire Murmurings

As I sit and listen to this sound  
So universal in time  
The sound of air rushing into the fire  
Keeping me warm this winter morning  
I am filled with the sense of transcending time  
And being at one with all that have sat and listened  
To this same sound

Friends stop and visit  
Share anecdotes of their lives  
"Have you heard this new song?"  
"Did you ever see the movie that so and so played in?"  
I've missed a lot of the things others have experienced



Instead, I've had the opportunity to sit and listen  
To this sound  
So many winter days and nights of my life

So many poems, songs, paintings, and sculpture  
Have risen up out of this winter song  
The sound of the fire murmurings

A-ho!

Oliver Loveday © February 1, 2006 9:30am EST

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Having discovered that bills had gone unpaid during January while I had been focusing on matters at hand, I got caught up on everything and started trying to put life back into balance again. I didn't have the funds I had anticipated but I felt good about the work I had done with Diane. I trusted that her reluctance to honor her commitment to share her knowledge with others and the commitment to purchase art that several others had made would work itself out. I believed in the goodness in people and anticipated many more good things would follow from these efforts. February, 2006, was a hard month to survive in the mountains of upper East Tennessee, but Maggie and I managed to keep the household functional. She was a cheerleader at her middle school so we would attend basketball games several times a week until the end of the season. As March arrived she started making plans to try out for track. I worked up another newsletter for my "on-line community". It was entitled "Wilson Drawing" and sent out on March 1, 2006. It reads as follows:

About 33 years ago I was struggling with where to go with my life. I had dropped out of college after I came to realize that I wasn't going to study advance physics and become another white coat in the special clearance lab at Y-12. One night I had a dream that changed my life. I can still remember the vivid colors that I saw in what was like watching liquid stained glass art form and gel, only to dissipate and become a new image. When I woke up, I thought about the dream and decided to go back to college and study art. A few months later I had a dream about all these clay pots unlike anything I had ever seen. So I added pottery to the list of classes that fall and was able to make some of those pots a year later. I graduated with a major in studio art and a minor in pottery in March, 1976.

Two years ago I had another dream about pottery. I was able to make several of those pots and one of my favorite sold last year to the newest patron on my list at that time. The other two pieces from that dream series is still available and can be viewed on-line at the "Dreaming in Color" web site. (I guess you know where I get my names for some things like web sites and art work also.)

I was reflecting back over this relationship between dream time work and art work recently and thought it would be good to relate some of the tribal cultural history that has played a role amongst humans for a while already. The Plains Indians refer to the

person that makes objects that were seen in Dream Time as a shield maker. (English translation only) The object isn't always considered a shield that would deflect an on-coming object during a physical conflict. It is also a connection back to the dream or vision and provides a "gate" for the Dream World to provide "star milk" or spiritual nourishment to that person so their life force energies are in constant renewal. Very few tribal cultures have a word in their language that means art. Art has become the object of a fragmented and fear-based culture that has spread like a cancer around the world. Since there are very few that are trying to create the physical objects that come from Dream Time, the earth has tried to create these images in other ways. That is where things like Crop Circles or UFO's have come from. A fragmented society looks to outside forces as the culprits.

In tribal culture the artist (for lack of a better word) is given the time and space to make things when there is enough food and shelter for the village so they don't have to be involved in these survival activities. One of the examples of this tradition in European culture is the Coat of Arms that is associated with royal families. A logo or trademark is a similar visual for a business today. It exemplifies the spiritual aspect of the family or business. When a person is able to trade a work of art from an artist that has been inspired by a dream, they are bringing the energy of the dream into their world. So long as the person that makes the objects is living their life in a good way, the dreams are providing good things to help that person. The energy that this person puts into their work becomes a blessing in the lives of those that take on the responsibility of caring for those objects. While my Cherokee tradition is a little different from that of the Plains Indians, it is a cultural taboo for me to relate much about my culture to those that aren't Cherokee. So I have to reference some of the basic aspects of this through other, more open, tribal cultures. All respect.

After a conversation with a friend a few months ago regarding the efforts some are making in peace keeping work, I did a meditation on whether one could project peace keeping efforts into a conflict. The response of this meditation was that it would only generate more conflict. So long as a person, or group of people, is intent upon generating conflict, any peace keeping efforts would only get sucked into the vortex of negative energy. It is like the response that Milarepa gave when asked to come down into the villages to teach. He said that he was doing more to spread peace and good will to humanity by remaining up in the mountains than he would by going amongst the populations and attempting to share his insights with them. The best way to spread peace throughout the world is to live a peaceful life. It's like that saying that was going around during the Vietnam War. "Fighting for peace is like making love for virginity."

I always loved the Wilson guy from "Home Improvement". I think he would like this new poem. It's a good day to plant snow peas and get some earth under my finger nails.

Peace.  
Oliver!

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Wilson Drawing

In the sleepy slumbering silence

Peace was all he said  
World unity  
Global co-operation  
League of Nations

And then he died  
And left us with his dream  
Drawing from that dream  
Drawing from what he left us with

Woodrow-ed in Wheeling  
Woodrow-ed in Tichit, Mauritania  
Woodrow-ed in Dili, East Timor  
Woodrow-ed in Bratislava

And they're breech loading in Springfield  
They're splitting more than just hairs in Oak Ridge  
Work is good at the munitions factory in Kingsport  
While troops are keeping the peace in Iraq

The missionaries save us from our selves  
While the credit card companies save us from our money  
While Woodrow lies there drawing in his last breath  
And says, "Don't let go of the dream."

A-ho!

Oliver Loveday March 1, 2006 9:10am EST

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As the weather got warmer I started working on the wood sculptures inspired from the dream four weeks or so earlier. I was able to sell one of the pieces of pottery I had done in 2004 that combined pit-fired pottery with basket weaving to create an interesting multi-media piece I called "Bitter Root Lodge Pot". This kept the bills paid and bought me enough sandpaper to work on the wood pieces. While completing a series of commissioned pieces the previous year I had revived a formula for making varnish my grandfather had given me. He said it was one that had been in the family a while and used by a cabinet maker in the family whose name remains in question, but the formula worked great. I had a sense of peace and well-being as I worked each day on these new pieces. I had so many going and the schedule of adding a new coat of varnish grew more complex, so I had to keep a clipboard of lists going to keep up with it all. Knowing that I would be selling more art soon and would be able to market these new pieces later in the year gave me a real sense of belonging in the world I had never experienced before. Things were looking good. I prepared for the warm season and the events that followed the rotation and phases of the moon each year. In honoring a dream I had several years

after Maggie was born, I had been hosting a stomp dance during the seven warm months of the year according to Cherokee tradition. On March 31, 2006, I sent out a newsletter entitled "Pellissippi Fire: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. It reads as follows:

On April 15, 2006, the new stomp season will begin again. As I reflect back over the years, I remember the dream that I had maybe ten years ago. During the dream I saw a stomp fire burning and someone was talking to me. They said that the Stomp Fire was getting ready to come back to the Smoky Mountains (Cherokee territory) in the way that it used to be done. In order to help with this process, I was to start keeping a fire the best that I could. Others would be coming to help so that the fire could be done in the same way that it was done 200 years ago. I started doing a fire for seven months each year after that dream, for four years. Then I took a break for a while because it seemed that I was doing most of the work and I had all I could do with taking care of Maggie and other duties at the time. A few years later Maggie asked me to start doing stomp again, so I moved the stomp grounds and renewed my efforts to honor her request.

On April 1, 2004 (April Fool's Day) I was served with divorce papers. Since things generally don't happen when they are marked with beginnings such as this, I didn't think the divorce would go through. But later I looked back and saw that some prayers were said by several people that made it possible for the divorce to go through. Several years before, Pat W had come to me and offered tobacco, asking for help with various physical problems. She agreed to express her gratitude and give something back to the People by doing feast for the first stomp of each season every year for the rest of her life as part of her "give-away". It was also stipulated that if she moved or for some reason I was no longer able to host stomp here, that she would provide a feast in her home on the same day as the first stomp would be done each season. For several years she honored her commitment and provided a feast, with the help of others, on the first stomp of that season. On April 9, 2004, she failed to honor her commitment. In reflection I understand today that she was aware that Edith was romantically involved with someone at work and Pat had made an attempt to get me interested in a romantic relationship with her self after the divorce went through. When she became aware that I had no interest in her, well, as the saying goes, hell knowth no fury like the wrath of a woman scorned. I wasn't even aware at the time that I was being pursued or had rejected this effort on her part. Like I said, I was committed to my marriage at the time and had no interest in anyone else.

So Pat said some prayers that didn't have my best interest at heart and the divorce went through. Those prayers didn't have the best interest of the People at heart either, and the impact that those prayers had on Maggie will mar her for the rest of her life. I had worked closely with Pat for several years with regard to Edith's recovery from drugs and alcohol because a person who has supposedly been sexually assaulted by a family member can usually tell when another person has gone through the same thing. I anticipated Pat being able to recognize that Edith had been sexually assaulted at around age ten while the same dynamic was taking place with her mother at work that Edith was doing at the time. I understand that Edith anticipated the same thing happening to Maggie that happened to her at that age. That is Edith's "normal" and it is easy to understand that a person anticipates the same things will happen to the next generation that happened to them. The only difference is that I don't have the same issues with alcohol that her family

had when she was a child. So it is easy to understand that Edith was willing to do whatever it took to protect Maggie from me over the past several years. That fact that Pat failed to see all of this in the manner it should have been seen indicates to me that she probable seduced the family member she had relations with, and when they got caught, she lied and said that she was raped. It is acceptable to tell lies when it is a part of survival in some people's minds.

So I have been the target of a smear campaign by a number of people that don't want the truth to come forward. When I reflected back over the last several months on what it is about me that has attracted women to me that were victims of incest, had a history of drug abuse, and their mothers or grandmothers had been subjected to shock treatments, I saw that the pattern was the result of several things in my own past. I was the one who blew the whistle on several pedophiles that had been molesting my sisters. I was the one who broke the silence. I can appear to some to be a protector and rescuer. I never implied that I was such, and still don't. When I fail to fulfill those expectations, the relationship falls apart and I am subjected to a character assassination and become the bad guy in a process of transference that allows that person to charge me with the crimes committed against them by the men in their childhood that hurt them. I am not "EVER MAN" and never agreed to the role, but it was thrust upon me anyway. This is understandable and forgivable.

So when the fire is lit on April 15, it will signal to the universe that Pat W has failed to silence me from speaking the truth. It will signal to Edith that she has failed to keep me from doing ceremony which was the primary intent of her divorce from me. Part of her anger was borne out of the fact that she never got the healing that she never asked for in the first place. She has never even openly admitted to being a victim. She has never in the fifteen and a half years that I have known her openly admitted to being wrong about anything. She has admitted to being wrong about things when it was the only way to get me to stop addressing the situation. When others saw the chance, they took the opportunity to get their kicks in as well, while a good man was down. They won't be here on April 15 unless they are willing to acknowledge that they were wrong and ask for forgiveness. Don't hold your breath either. On April 15 a victory song will be sung to honor all those that did their best to keep that fire from burning. I am reminded of a song by Robbie Robertson that was part of the sound track to "Pow-wow Highway" called "Sweet Fire Of Love". In it the several lines go like this. "Didn't we break the silence/didn't we light the fire."

We did.

The afternoon meal will be prepared on the grounds then there will be the traditional ball game afterwards. The evening meal will be ready before sundown. Bring chairs to sit in, as I'm a little short on these right now.

Oliver!

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If one had done of drawing illustrating the spirit of this newsletter, it would show a boxer entering the ring while leading with the chin. I was tired of all the negative energy flying around from those engaged in their efforts to destroy me. I wanted peace

and if that meant calling them out and leading with the chin, I was ready to do that. I was ready to have this spiritual war come to completion and let the chips fall where they may. I was tired of waking up from dreams that showed me the persons doing ritual prayers of negative intent and the outcome that would fall upon them, never mind the damage done to all other parties concerned. I loved these people and had done everything I could to help them over the years I had known them. Their anger or desire to be hurtful made no sense to me. Needless to say, Edith was enraged when she got a copy of this newsletter in the mail. She threatened to call my sisters and read it to them. I told her there was no need to do this as I had mailed them copies also. It didn't matter. The stomp fire was started on the appointed time and the war continued unabated. It wasn't until several years later that several of the main players in this war finally had enough and made the long journey to the other side. May they rest in peace. We'll all make our own journey soon enough.

It wasn't long after the first stomp dance that I knew I was in trouble financially. I discovered that my checking account had fallen below the required amount for the electronic withdrawals that happened at the beginning of each month to pay several bills. I kept forgetting to balance in these electronic withdrawals each month. I scrambled to generate enough funds to get the account back into the black. I had a \$500.00 overdraft cushion with the account which increased the amount of overdraft funds I had to cover. I didn't have the mortgage payment. I sent out promotional media to all the patrons who had purchased art in the past in hopes of generating a few sales between then and the time Kevin sold the real estate he had on the market for over \$3.5M which was his collateral to back up his contractual commitment to purchase \$50,000.00 worth of art during 2006 and again in 2007. More wood pieces made it out of the studio and into storage during the months of April and May. Finally in mid-June I issued another newsletter to my on-line friends. My mortgage was in foreclosure by now and I was barely keeping the lights on. The telephone bill was overdue and Maggie and I were eating more beans and rice than meat and potatoes. This was a drastic turn-around from the previous year while the promise of helping out several people with physical needs still remained in the future. It was like the Piped Piper had led the rats to the river and was awaiting payment. The townspeople were amusing themselves with comments about how the rats wouldn't come walking back up out of the river when they refused to pay the Pied Piper the agreed upon amount for his services. I couldn't believe that humanity could be so thick as to allow this to happen to me. I still anticipated a cliffhanger recovery. This is reflected in the June 22, 2006, newsletter.

## **Summertime: Lightning and Thunder, Visions**

Teething pups and items left lying about make for more excitement that I need some days. Yesterday I left my glasses, which were in their case, lying on the table next to my seat on the back porch. When I came back an hour later, they were gone. I checked all the other places I normally leave them, but they weren't there. I went out in the yard where Pooch hangs out and chews on things and there they were. She chewed some of the soft material off the case, which probably felt a little like an animal skin, and the plastic cover off the left ear piece. It stays interesting around here.

One of the things I dislike about getting older is that holding things closer to see them better doesn't work any longer. Glasses have become a regular part of my day. Some days I can still read a newspaper for a short time, but most of the time when reading or working on art, the glasses perch on my nose. I've been reading some again. I used to read several hundred books a year during high school on up until about 20 years ago. Then one day I felt like I was full of words and stopped reading. Over the past ten years I would relate in a conversation that I didn't read that much, only e-mail. As I've been sorting out things recently I've pulled out boxes of books that were in storage and discovered book markers half way through several books from, let's see, twenty years ago. How did that happen? So that's why my glasses were left lying on the table on the back porch. I've started reading again.

One of the things I found in storage was a copy of The Sun, August 2003, Issue 332. (<http://www.thesunmagazine.org>) It had an interview of Rubin Carter that I found interesting. While serving time in prison during the twenty years it took him to get acquitted he went from a person consumed with rage and anger to one that was conscious that through self-awareness he could change from within. It was through this that he says the miracle of his release from prison came about. The turning point was when he knew he couldn't use his discipline of law studies to bring about his freedom. He had to start accessing spiritual information, so he had a friend bring him books that would help. The two writers that he related as being the most instrumental in changing his thinking around was the Russian spiritual philosopher Georges Ivanovich Gurdjieff and his student P.D. Ouspensky. He wrote an autobiography while in prison, The Sixteenth Round, in case anyone is interested in reading more about him.

It was a timely article for me to read, as I've been working through the post-traumatic stress disorder that has descended over the last few years. I've never read anything by Gurdjieff that I can remember, but I have had a number of conversations with others that have study his works extensively over the years. A common thread runs through this and other teachings. While I'm on a new reading phase, I should look up some of these books and fill in some of the blanks in my reading.

In the interview, one of the things that Carter relates is this:

“You can't change the system in the long run. The only thing you can change on this planet is yourself. You cannot change another single thing. You can't change your mother. You can't change your father. You can't change your wife. You can't change your children. You can't change your grandparents. You can't change the government. You can't change anything. But you do have the possibility of changing yourself, waking up.

Those who are awake don't let the sleeping people to know it, because the sleeping people will crucify them. They don't want to hear about peace and family and love and brotherhood and sisterhood. They want to hear, ‘I want mine. I want my money. I want my guns. I want my drink. I want my drugs. I want my football game.’”

The part that disturbed me in that passage was the part where those that are awakened don't let the others that are still asleep know that they have awakened. I understand that when the Buddha became enlightened and went back to the village, he thought everyone was enlightened as well. So there's a certain level of street smarts that one has to have as part of the spiritual journey of self-awareness. But when I read those

lines about how the ones who are still asleep will crucify those who have awakened, I thought, “Okay, it’s time for me to shut up.” But I never do.

This time of the year brings its sound track to my mind. Gershwin’s “Summertime” recorded by Janis Joplin is certainly a favorite of mine, but the best tune for summer is “Summer in the City” by The Lovin’ Spoonful. Several songs by CCR and “I Guess That’s Why They Call It The Blues” by Elton John are also on the summer sound track. It’s the sort of stuff I enjoy listening to while working in the studio. I finished a large black walnut piece recently, “Bear Cub’s Dream”, which stands nearly four feet tall. I have been doing collage again as well. I finished a piece I started back in the winter entitled “Blues for RT”. RT stands for Rolling Thunder, who was a Cherokee Medicine Man living out in Carlin, Nevada, that I went to see in 1977 after having an unusual experience while living alone in a cabin in the mountains the year before. In August, 1977, Patty and I drove out to Nevada to meet Rolling Thunder to see if he would help me understand this experience. He was away on a trip at the time, so we stayed for four days while awaiting his return. On the morning of the fourth day, after he had returned the previous day, I woke up just before sunrise while hearing a voice telling me, “You don’t get a teacher this lifetime. The whole Universe is your teacher this lifetime.” So I packed up and returned to Tennessee and didn’t even wait to meet Rolling Thunder. I suppose it helps being Cherokee to understand how someone could do this. I don’t know. It worked for me. All the teachers I needed were here, the wind, sun, clouds, animals, birds, insects, fire, rain, mountains, and rivers. Sometimes people would be teachers, but usually they taught me what not to do with regard to the spiritual concerns related to the experience in 1976. I came to the understanding that I had a vision much like a young man would have had after two weeks alone in the woods during the time before the White Man came to Turtle Island.

Rolling Thunder remained prominent throughout my life in spite of the fact that I only had an audience with him twice after that. Both Patty and Edith met RT before they married me as well, so they had no excuses either time. The collage had as the central image a picture of RT from his interview in The Mother Earth Magazine that my mother had saved for me before I met Edith. The collage also includes Patty and Edith’s signatures as part of the collage. Like the dream I had of RT in November, 1987, after having been cleared of false allegations of sex abuse made by Patty in 1986, but still in the process of defending my parental rights to our sons, Noah and Gabriel, this piece has many layers. I feel like I finished several collages at once. Maybe it’s just PTSD and the disconnectedness that comes with it.

So thirty years ago I was living in a cabin in the mountains without electricity or running water. I had to hike half a mile in from the road. I had a Coleman lantern and camping stove to cook with. I read books, wrote poetry, and did art. I shot several rolls of film during that time. The notebook of writings from that time is a mess. Most of the pieces aren’t dated. A few are. Here’s a sample of what I was writing back then. The original piece was handwritten on two pieces of paper and dated. I found several drafts of the piece typed out, but not dated. The “final draft” follows the original text. Enjoy!

Oliver!

The Lightning and Thunder, Visions



The truth just sits and grins  
And sins create substitutes  
That shoots through silence into sounds  
That comes down to this moment

The ashes of retina fragments fall from images  
Of red brick walls like loneliness  
That touches tall buildings  
Or the sound of the wind through the trees  
But the silence remains like a trance

And through the darkness these words fall  
Like night rain or rather  
Like lightning  
As if God is speaking during these mirrored thoughts  
Of some every day living

But to say seeing the light is enough  
Would be foolish  
That would deal with half the image  
You still have to wait and hear the thunder  
Music and words let the wind in  
But a painting does nothing but show you  
Where we know the wind has been

We have painted the sun set  
And in so doing  
Pushed our eyes beyond it into a realm of reality  
That lets us see both sides of our lives  
Through the haze of time  
And spins our feelings with backbreaking speed  
Into a space that flesh cannot fill

We drink visions of dust  
While layers of consciousness  
Flow like the earth until time is a game  
With which to number the Holy Masses

As the visions become physical  
Through earth, air, fire, and water  
There is a realization that though the total process  
Of materialization takes place  
In the primitive gut-level effort of life  
Its origins spring from the lightning and thunder  
Of spiritual silence that is beyond the physical

The search for security in knowing  
How to keep in touch with this creative awareness  
Leads the artist creator off the path of society  
And out into the naked darkness beyond the sunset  
Where the wind is our own thoughts  
The lightning and thunder, visions

Oliver Loveday © 5/28/76/New Moon

### The Lightning and Thunder, Visions (Revised)

I.

The truth just sits and grins  
And sins create substitutes  
That shoots through silence into  
Sounds that come down into this moment  
The ashes of retina fragments fall from  
Images of red brick walls like loneliness  
That touches tall mountains or the sound  
Of the wind through the trees  
But the silence remains like a trance  
And through the darkness these words fall  
Like night rain as if God is speaking during  
The mirrored thoughts of everyday living

II.

We have pushed our eyes beyond the sunset  
Into a realm of reality that lets us see  
Both sides of our lives through the haze  
Of time and spins our senses with electric  
Speed into a space that flesh cannot fill  
We drink Visions of Dust while layers  
Of historic consciousness flow in cerebral  
Patterns like the rocks and dirt of Earth  
Until time is a game we use to number  
The Holy Masses

III.

As dreams pass through the door  
Of my conscience into reality  
I realize the physical effort of  
Materialization is only half the process  
I search for the origin of visions  
The key to the door

The search leads me off the path of society  
And out into the naked darkness  
Beyond the sunset  
Where the wind is my spirit thoughts  
The lightning and thunder, visions

Oliver Loveday © 1976

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The dual reality of a mad rush of creative energy while working on art juxtaposed against the continuing crash of financial security and impending doom continued all summer in 2006. The only way I could find peace each day was to do art. It was like I was a child living with my parents and three sisters all over again. The only time I felt any peace back then was when doing something creative or reading. All other times were consumed with impending doom as my sisters plotted to get me in trouble and watch while one or the other parent flogged me. Usually it was my father, who always told me he was doing this because he loved me. I felt like humanity was punishing me for honoring my dreams and visions through indigenous rituals in hopes of helping others overcome physical challenges. I didn't know whether to forgive or ask for forgiveness. This was reflected in the next essay I sent out on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006, entitled "Tempest Times".

With the heat of summer generating that stew of energy that spills out into creative efforts, I have pondered the events that have transpired over the past few weeks and I am at a loss of words. There are times where there is a clear value system with which to assess matters, and other times when it is hard to speak of a topic without allowing words to offend another without meaning to. These are unusual times and call for unusual measures. When I am at a loss for words there are other voices that relate what I would if I could, perhaps not better in that exact sense, but close enough so that it is spoken.

When there have been wrongs committed by all parties concerned, healing can only come forth through mutual forgiveness. It is in the words of Prospero in *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare that one finds the character beginning to negotiate his way from that of the victim to one who can forgive and thus transcend. I offer a bit of a review of the play as found on this web page: <http://www.centenary.edu/fye/tempest>

*"Prospero's acute sense of injury makes it especially difficult for him to forgive and trust others, which he must do if he is to return his marriageable daughter to the human world. It's not that Prospero has to forget that his brother has wronged him; rather, he must abandon his overwhelming and debilitating sense that he is the innocent victim. Forgiveness, after all, is an act of generosity despite real injury. And forgetting, as in "forgive and forget," doesn't mean becoming oblivious to the past; it means overcoming the selfish sense that one's personal injury trumps all other concerns. Only when Prospero can forgive others - whether or not they merit his forgiveness - can he*

*reintegrate into human society. Such forgiveness of the trespasses of others, rather than any exercise of power, is indeed God-like”*

In a complex reality there can be a thin line between over-simplification and reductive logic. There is a continual need for balance and conflict in order for regeneration and transition to occur. The old adage, “The desire for success insures failure” isn’t about success or failure. It is about desire. The voice of Prospero in the Epilogue is the acceptance of surrender away from being the innocent victim of his own desire/design to that of being an equal amongst peers. When we can separate that which we desire from that which we surmise as being for the greater good of all, then we become a saner bunch of folks. As I leave you with this bit of Epilogue from the Bard, I bid ye Shalom.

PROSPERO: *(from The Tempest, epilogue)*

Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,  
And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer,  
Which pierces so that it assaults  
Mercy itself and frees all faults.  
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,  
Let your indulgence set me free.

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It was a newsletter with no name at the end of it, only an epilogue. The short bit of verse was first endeared to me with its inclusion in “The Garage Sale” by Ken Kesey, published sometime in the mid-1970’s. If this was it, then I would close things out the same way. The telephone lines were about to be disconnected. A foreclosure sale was impending. I didn’t know how much longer I would be at 225 Pumpkin Valley Road, or indeed, in this world. I felt like I had merged with the land at this address and losing it now would also mean the end of my life. I felt like those that had conspired against me had truly intended to generate my untimely demise and were about to succeed in spite of my best efforts to continue honoring the dreams and visions. Some of them knew that the visions had been site specific and I could only use them to help the People from this place. I could sell my work but I could not sell my time in order to make a living. That was part of the vision. It didn’t matter. They had gotten help through these dreams and visions and now they were putting everything in their power in to the effort to remove me from this place. I couldn’t understand why humanity had responded in this manner after all the work I had done. It didn’t make sense. There were a number of things that had been accomplished through the use of the sacred altar including addressing HIV, diabetes, Hep-C, heart disease, kidney failure, numerous types of cancer and so forth. Surprisingly, broken bones and third degree burns were amongst the challenges that had been addressed through the usage of the teachings handed down through the generations.

The dreams continued to suggest that great things were in store for the future, including the possibility that many young people would seek out the locality and spend time learning to honor their own dreams and visions as the roles of tribal spirituality continued to regenerate within the next generation. I was stressed to the limit and felt like I was walking through thin air as only slightly thicker air most of the time.

What I didn't know at the time was that a corporate entity had made an offer on the 500 acres owned by Kevin and he had accepted their offer. Communications between Kevin and I had continually eroded through the summer for no apparent reason. There was no indication from him that a sale was in the works while I rode out the madness of a foreclosure auction in September. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I sent out a newsletter entitled "Up a Tree: a sub-August 2006 newsletter"

This morning I woke up from a dream sequence that included a scene where a woman was up in a tree singing an honoring song about me to the group gathered below. As we waited for Maggie's bus, I related this dream to her and she laughed at the idea of someone up a tree singing a song about me. Some days we're all up a tree. I have no idea what this means, but it's as funny to me as it was Maggie.

I want to send an old friend, Francis Watts, a print of a photograph of her and her daughter from 1979. I got out the photography albums and found a few that would work, but also saw page after page of memories. Twenty eight years ago I moved to this area and have been hosting gatherings of one form or the other every since. As I looked at the pictures of gatherings from twenty five years ago and back a few years I wondered if any of these people would ever come back to see these images. Have they all gone on with life and left this part of their journey behind like a memory best forgotten? I thought about two people who are living off his disability check as they approach their sixties and they have moved four times in the last ten years. These haven't been work related moves in search of a better job or way of life. These are moves that are part of the restlessness of humanity in this day and age. The old adage, no matter where I go I always seem to show up there as well, is so true.

The reason I'm revisiting the photo album and thinking about this is because Francis was one of those restless spirits that came through many times for nearly ten years. A few weeks ago she called up out of the blue and said she was thinking about doing some painting again and this reminded her of me. She said she wanted to send me some money as payment for some work I did for her 25 years ago. The check came in the mail last week. It is a small sum compared to the challenges I face at the moment, but it was a reminder that we always get back what we put out at some point in our journey on down the line. While I've lived in two different places in the last 28 years, I've been a restless spirit also. Some days we're up in a tree. Some days we're out on a limb. Some day someone will stop and count the rings in the grain of a stump and wonder what it was all like back then. If they listen closely they will hear it in a song, if only in the wind blowing past them.

Johanna Watts: <http://www.csiguide.com/cast.asp?csi=1715>

<http://www.thejohannasite.com/index.html>

The memories we make are the memories our children will live with for the rest of their lives.

Oliver!

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A few days later Kevin came by to tell me he had closed on the sale of the real estate. I had not eaten hardly anything for several days while riding out the opportunity for more funding to come through. I was excited at the prospect of selling some work and getting things back going in a positive direction again. I had all the new work ready to view. I could barely think straight from hunger, caffeine withdrawal, and stress, but all was well now. Instead, he sat down and wrote me out a check for a small sum of money and told me that it was a down payment for a mural he wanted me to paint. I was stunned. He wanted me to do a “religious altar” for a local private school sponsored by the church he attended when in town. I didn’t know anything about religious altars of this nature. I didn’t understand why we were discussing this instead of going through my art so he could select the fore-mentioned financial-valued amount of art. As I sat and looked at the check, Kevin got up and walked away. He left. It was too late to go to the bank that day. The next day I went in and deposited the check. The teller told me that since it was an out of town check, the bank would have to hold it for five business days. The nearest office branch of the bank the check was drawn from was less than ten miles down the road in the next county. The main office was in the county seat which was thirty minutes away. This wasn’t like the check was an out-of-state bank account. Nothing I said could change their mind. I was as broke as I had been the day before. I went home and rode out the madness. I received a letter a few days later saying the check had cleared. I sent the mortgage company a check that would catch up the mortgage. It was returned a few days later with a letter stating that I would need to include an additional \$500.00 penalty along with interest and late fees and it would need to be a cashier’s check from the bank. I called and made arrangements so I could hand deliver the check in time to stop the foreclosure auction. By the time all this was taken care of, along with catching up the other bills I had, there were barely any funds left. I had enough food to last a few weeks. Kevin returned to his primary residence in New York and wouldn’t answer the phone or correspond with me. On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I received an e-mail from Kevin stating that he had received pennies to the dollar with the sale of the real estate he had inherited from his father and he could no longer support my work or communicate with me. I knew that further communication would be a waste of time because the man was suffering from some as yet undiagnosed mental disorders.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> I sent out a newsletter about the upcoming Sacred Run for the Return of the Buffalo. This was part of a series of three newsletters regarding this event for that year, but I’m only going to include this one for now.

I just received the news that we recently lost another of our fellow Runners to the Great Beyond. Angie crossed over in the Mayo Clinic on August 10, 2006 after her struggle with cancer. Angie is of Cherokee descent and a mother of two sons and a daughter, and an honored Grandmother. In October 1992 she stood in the Circle at the

conclusion of the Bull Run and held the stick with David F. Regrettably the stick was later broken, but she endeavored to honor her heritage and culture the best she could throughout her life.

Angie was an accomplished artist of traditional Native American arts and crafts with a range of patrons from Cher, who bought several traditional costumes from Angie during her “Native American” period for performance purposes, to pow-wow and rendezvous patrons, to folks like you and me. She was often in the position of providing for her children through sales of her arts and craft work and was very proud of the fact that she seldom had to ask for help because of this.

I most remember Angie for her good cooking, as she was one of the best and made a special effort to prepare good meals whenever I was able to enjoy her food. She is also remembered in my heart as someone who shared her life stories of struggling to come to terms with not knowing her father throughout her childhood and the support she offered me with my role as a father having lost contact with my sons from the time they were three and five until the present (and beyond?). She related that she came to understand that fathers didn’t walk away from broken homes and children to go off and start a new life without remorse or hurt feelings through watching my struggles and hearing my prayers in the sweat lodge as I struggled to deal with my own loss. In 1992 I initiated the “Spoil the Rod and Spare the Child” staff with three other people of Cherokee descent that had also been physically abused as children and had grown up to find the need to use their creative outlets through arts and crafts to help deal with the PTSD resulting from their childhood experiences. The staff was intended to be prayed with during ceremonies and anyone who wanted to pray for their own “wounded child”, children at risk today, and the next generation yet to come could add their sacred object to the staff. When Angie heard of this staff she immediately started to make something for it. I remember her tears as she added her gift to the staff and spoke of how she knew that her prayers were making the world a better place for all of us, as we are all Children in the eyes of the Creator.

In honor of Angie I am offering the opportunity for another Runner who knew Angie to carry the “Spoil the Rod and Spare The Child” staff with them this year. This staff has never touched the ground outside the sweat lodge since its conception over 14 years ago, including having been carried by me during my third year to dance in 1994 while at Four Winds Sun Dance in South Dakota, and many other times when it has been carried during Runs by myself and others, both here and at other places. I would especially like to see one of the women commit to carry this staff, but if no one else is willing to take on this responsibility, I will. I don’t ask anyone to do something I’m not willing to do myself. I also appreciate being treated this way by others. Life is good.

One of my first conversations with Angie resulted from her having read the poem “Road Dust Memory” of which I gave away copies of at a Sun Dance in 1991. I’m sharing this poem with you now in memory of Angie.

Have a good journey, Angie. You will be missed.

Oliver!

## ROAD DUST MEMORY

Three fires in this dream and fire begets fire

Riding in the soupy summer night.  
Cool air blowing freedom into the open window.  
Mind merges with machine and freedom sings up from wheels  
on the road.  
Teenaged and life beckons.  
Radio provides the sound track. An anthem.  
Some war, somewhere else, imposes itself on the drifting signal  
at the top of the hour as real as the draft blasting through  
the car window, an anxiety forgotten as quickly as it is felt.  
Another song, another smoke, an empty tank and the night grows  
old and tired.  
Tomorrow, dreams will mean nothing in the face of summer jobs and  
school boy desire.

Suddenly, in Santa Fe, it all makes sense.  
Twenty years later, down by the Santa Fe River that only runs  
when the flood locks upstream spill the overflow.  
Thunder storms provide an excess of water and memory.  
The road isn't freedom, it is the path from one conflict to  
another.  
Going is the break that makes you.  
Getting there is the entire trip.  
Being there is some silence a road never gives.  
These four walls and a lover, somewhere else, some other time,  
and we all need love.

Political songs about social change never make it on the radio  
anymore.  
Honey, that was just a phase we were all going through.  
Spiritual change is not very commercial.  
Best left to the ones in charge of St Peter, Paul and the Virgin Mary.  
We can't change the world so we may as well join it, buy a BMW or an Astro Van.  
Drink imports and wear a crystal.  
Forget the road and fly the threatened and threatening.  
Political change jingles to the tune of MegaBucks, MegaDeath, and  
a MegaWatt undercurrent hum.  
The ones in charge charge and if you can't pay then buy on time  
which is running out faster than you think,  
faster than you can dream.  
The road calls.  
Another town.  
Another coke machine at a gas station that closes at sundown.



Fires Coil around the brain and burn all night.

fires flicker like heat lightning  
fires that once burned along this river  
fires that remember this ancient song  
fires that remember ancient drums  
fires that danced through bitter tears

The sun rises once more to send winds to scatter the ashes.

Anger wells up like fires erupting from Earth.

Old anger of wounds inflicted on young bodies that become  
invisible scars that cut deeper into the souls of the adults.

Anger of unrequited love.

Anger of love turned sour and worse.

Legal maneuvers and false accusations that take the children away  
and take the youth out of the children.

Anger that wakes us up in the morning and sings us to sleep each  
night until we awaken one day to a body of anger.

Too cold and empty to feel anymore.

and still the fires burn  
and the dancers honor the drum  
and history is passed on to those who still dream

Each fire has its own song, its own breath.

The fire keeper looks into it to find its current meaning.

Fire leaves its mark as accurate as lightning.

and seven sisters sing in the night

The morning star completes the chorus.

The last fire consumes its last piece of fuel.

The turtle moves, as ancient as ice  
as ancient as fire.

The chosen ones sing one last song and memory is satisfied.

We know the ones who keep the spark for the next fire.

We know the ones willing to die so the chosen ones may live.

We know the ones killing those who serve the people.

We know where we sit in this circle.

The fire gives life to all in this circle.

It sings a soft sweet song.

It is telling me its song.

Now I have written it down.

Now the fire has told you who you are.

Fires burn like distant thunder.

HO!

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I carried the “Spoil the rod and spare the child” staff in Angie’s honor, and indeed, in honor of all the wounded children throughout the world. It was a good run. Sometime during the month I woke up one morning with a sharp pain in my right shoulder. I knew I had ripped a tendon in my rotary cuff similar to the one I had ripped in my left shoulder while working on the house several years earlier. This one would take almost nine months to heal. I had hoped that doing the sweat lodge ceremonies along with the Sacred Run for the Buffalo would help heal it faster. It might have helped but the stress kept causing me to do motions in my sleep that continued to irritate it. On September 29th, 2006, I sent out this newsletter entitled “Sketchy Memory and Raw Takes”

## Sketchy Memory

Got a call from my dad the other day that his sister was back in the hospital, so I got Maggie off to school yesterday and took off down the road for a family visit in the middle of the week. I guess you could call us a superstitious family because I chose to go through Choptack passed Cloud Creek instead of going down Treadway to get to 11W. The Highway Patrol has been doing roadblocks at the crossroads of 31 and 33 the past month looking for folks driving without a license. It’s harvest time and there are a lot of migrants in the area, but while there’s more of them in Hawkins County than Hancock County, there’s less political resistance to roadblocks in Hancock County. On down the road past the Buffalo Trail and over through White Pine and Kodak, all these once villages at the edge of the grazing lands of the Eastern Black Buffalo 300 years ago.

Dad and I got to the hospital and when I woke his sister she didn’t recognize me right off. I guess I should wear a dress-up shirt more often. We talked a bit and you could tell she didn’t want to smile because one side of her face doesn’t do that any more. She would hold the bed spread up to her face to hide her expressions for the first little bit. Then I told a few jokes like I used to tell when we were all much younger and you could see the twinkle in her eyes and she stopped caring what she looked like when she smiled or laughed. The OT came in to do an evaluation and it was like getting a glimpse into the crystal ball of what the future would be for me. Both my dad and his sister have had strokes that left them paralyzed on their right side, with dad still having some use of his arm while his leg is almost fully functional. As I got ready to leave she held my hand for a few minutes during our good byes, as touch is a vital part of our lives and the elderly don’t get that much from family any more. All I had to offer was this calloused hand with a few rough rings left from blisters. In a few days they’ll move her back to transitional care, or as my sister said, “Let’s just call it a nursing home and be done with it.” Reality never was gentle and good insurance doesn’t sugar-coat the truth.

On the way home I stopped for gas and noticed that the weather had changed quickly in the last hour or so. It had been partly cloudy with a good deal of sunshine on an unseasonably cool morning. Now dark clouds were rolling in with strong winds. Dad and I had seen a “whistle pig” or ground hog feeding along 411 that morning near

Wildwood and we talked about how nocturnal animals will come out to eat during the day if there's going to be a bad storm later that day. A few miles down the road from the gas station I saw large pools of water over in the golf course that used to be good grazing for buffalo and later beef herds when farming still paid enough here to make a living at it. I was a little confused by the white powder looking stuff along the road until I realized that it was hail that had washed off the road into piles three to four inches deep. It felt strange driving along past ice in September. Ice that wasn't going anywhere fast. It's been 17 years or more since I started talking about the glacial cycles and how it was nearing the end of the melt back and the beginning of a new round of ice that would come all the way down to the Ohio River a few hundred miles north of here. Sociological readings about Cargo Cults and Ghost Dance indicates that we humans don't deal with rapid change on a socio-economic scale very well. We ignore the voices of our prophets and pretend that life is going to remain the same no matter what the price of gas is this week. Twelve hundred years ago the rains stopped coming through Chaco Canyon and the corn stopped growing, so the people moved on, leaving behind sketchy memories craved in stone and broken shards of pottery. There's no classes offered on Transitional Technology in the universities, just methods of hiding profits and losses so the stockholders don't know where their money went.

Another day came and went and this morning the daughter got ready for school dressed in pajamas and instant hair color, as its pajama and wild hair day at school. It's 38 and rainy. I got another cup of coffee and put on "Raw Takes" for my first listen to a new CD by Red Hawkins. I knew most of the songs already because of phone conversations over the last few months while these songs were being written. Sketchy memory betrays me because I generally have to listen to songs several times before I can get the lyrics matched up with the titles on the cover. Raw Takes is the right title for most of these tunes because they need more playing time to get the timing worked out. John Prine titled one of his early albums "Diamonds in the Rough" but that's a little cheeky when you listen to some well polished tunes on the album. Artists tend to be embarrassed about showing their hand in progress, but that's what Raw Takes does. The Kerrville Folk Festival is another six months away and one can feel the difference already between these songs now and what they might sound like by the time Red Hawkins did them there, if that were to happen. In listening to the songs I feel like I've been given this intimate opportunity to be a part of the creative process from sound sketches to finished works of art. It's a different palette than that found on "Warm Rain and Lightning", the first collection of songs by Red Hawkins. (My review of that CD can be found on the review page of his web site.) From the first note off the guitar string to the fading chords of the last song one feels like they're sitting on the porch with someone who had hopped trains with the hobos in the 30's, drank with the roving outlaw bandits of the 1880's, or hitchhiked to Detroit to find work after the Big War..

Back when hitchhiking was my favorite mode of transportation I was known as Red because I always wore a red jacket during cool weather and had a red handkerchief hanging out of my back pocket. That makes it a little hard to give a nod to someone else who goes by the same name and even thumbed down some of the same roads I did back then. We'll ignore that and move on. The first track, "Wind up in the trees", gets a discussion going about all the songs that have been written about the sound of the wind through the trees here in this area and how this one fits right in. "Carolina Pines" and

“Hickory Wind” are a few songs that capture that feeling, but they weren’t written by someone that lived near the “Trail of the Lonesome Pine” like Red Hawkins did. “Ain’t No More Cowboys” on track two laments the changes in our great land and the loss of open spaces that defined who we were and where we were going when it all started out as “of the People, by the People, and for the People” but without the political edge good art can do and still make the point. “Lightly Dancing Touch” is one of those songs that makes you feel like you’re sitting in the front seat at the drive-in theater while the fellow in the back is expressing his undying love to his sweetheart. Well, that’s my take on it. The other gender might have another take on it, but that’s the beauty of an art that isn’t afraid to be intimate in a healthy manner. A well recorded drum beat starts out “All of the People” and while it is a great song sung with no other accompaniment except the drum, one still wonders how it would sound if sung with more rough expression found in blues or work songs. It’s one of those songs waiting for someone else to interpret and take way past the songwriter’s first effort and deserves to be done that way. What excites me is knowing where it started which is what I get from other songwriter collections with songs that were later done by those that could give the song its due. “Traveling Shoes” (#6) and “Cry Me To Sleep” (#9) are the two best written songs on the CD in my opinion. The lyrics catch my ear and the solo accompaniment on the guitar gets the job done without taking the attention away from the words or singer. That’s what good folk music is supposed to be. “Welcome Home, She Sang To Me” (#11) is one of the more polished cuts on the album and was inspired by the televised report of Dolly Parton showing her patriotic spirit to the first of the wounded in the latest effort to free Babylon of the previous efforts of the USA to free Babylon for cheap oil. In the Appalachian tradition of giving voice to those that didn’t make it back home, the song has a great line about the moral issues behind war.

Red Hawkins gives us music as fresh from the muse as we’ll get it with these songs. His web site will offer credit card orders in the near future, but in the meanwhile one can still go get the information they need to send a money order and get this collection while the first run of self-produced CD-R copies are available. I’ve always enjoyed being able to catch the first indication of a songwriter who is going to break through to make their mark on the pages of musical history and this is another of those singer/songwriters I’ll suggest you check out.

<http://www.redhawkins.com/>

Oliver!

Chances taken in the wind

This is turned on now  
All the range of senses acute  
Wide and intense in the double edge  
Looking and this seeing with no diminish  
Hearing like the ear is pressed into the fiber  
Waves rolling in like the crest of a storm  
Burning deep into the shadow of knowing

Keeping the fire burning against all odds  
Dancing inside the field of motion, or moving anyway  
This and then the words come  
The colors flow  
The chips fly  
Art and music  
Life marks against a static stone  
Cave smudge or museum dreams  
This is work while alive.

Oliver Loveday © 9/14/06/1am EDT

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I made the mortgage payment for October 2006 with a little help from some friends. There wasn't a lot of funding coming through otherwise, so food, coffee, tobacco, and other expenses continued to be a stress issue. The art work continued to flow. I got a little work doing web design which I talked about in the September 2006 newsletter. I mean, I talked about the artist in question who had also hired me to do some web design. I enjoyed the work and the music, but it wasn't paying the bills. On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I sent out a recent poem as the newsletter installment. The subject line read "Rains and Silence: October 2006".

Tears in vain no more

Tears in vain  
This hurt that is hurting  
Dark clouds roll in  
Rain washes my face clean

Walking aimlessly  
Brambles tugging at my sleeves  
No path before me  
No sense of direction behind me

Searching the sky for signs  
Seeking order in the madness  
Checking memories for indications  
Where it all went so crazy

Darkness and despair  
Finding the heart in a song  
Feeling the beauty in the wind  
Making my way back to joy

Art does more than imitate life

Creativity pushes past the known  
The next vision questions everything  
The bliss of success yields to depression

Letting the feeling flow  
Soaking up the reality of balance  
Tomorrow will be the beginning  
Of another ascent into what will be next

These tears that express the struggle  
They've been here before  
Some days they are from being weary  
Other days they make jubilant waters

Oliver Loveday © 10/28/06/1:25am EDT

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In early November 2006 I hosted a cookout for friends from AA meetings. It was the first time “Big Blue”, as the bent-pole lodge was called, had been used for a cookout since before the divorce. Relearning how to make lodging with the materials on hand seemed to be an important skill as the climate changes progressed and the need for quick and easy lodging became an issue in the near future. About four years earlier a small group of us lashed poles together and covered them with cardboard I had saved from building materials while building the house and used them as part of the covering over the bent poles. After the cardboard when on to protect the plastic tarps from the jagged edges of rapidly trimmed branches on cedar poles, the tarps were added to give a waterproof enclosure. It took a bit of experimentation to get the smoke hole right, since none of those working on the project had ever lived in a lodge with a smoke hole. It lacked certain attributes that would be relevant to a lodge one might actually live in, like a level area of surface, but it gave some indication of what it would be like were one needing to live in primitive shelter again. For one winter before the final curtain fell on Edith’s reign at 225 Pumpkin Valley Road, we held cookouts every month for five months dubbed the Fry Bread Socials. It felt good to hear folks inside the lodge cooking over the fire or enjoying a cup of coffee and a smoke by the fire. A few weeks later on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I posted a newsletter entitled “Bare Trees and Persimmon Pudding”.

Two weeks ago I hosted a gathering which was announced as “Friends and Families in Recovery” cookout. It was an “Anonymous” affair with a small group of friends coming to enjoy an afternoon of food, great weather, and friends old and new. It was great to watch a friend who was probably the chubby kid that everyone picked on 35 years ago roasting a hot dog over the fire while several others told him how to roast it right. He kept on roasting his hot dog the way he wanted to do it while engaging in lively banter with his would-be coaches. It was a healing event for me in my journey towards balance in a topsy-turvy world. For the past four years I’ve found acceptance in a

fellowship of friends that I needed while going through a difficult transition in my life. As I have related in person many times over the last 16 years, I'm a drunk learning to be an Indian (Native American) again. One of the things I wanted to do for the cookout was to make persimmon pudding from "Spirit of the Harvest" a cookbook that has recipes from tribal cultures across the United States. I've been under the weather with the sinus infection that has been going around and didn't have the energy to get the pudding made that day. So as soon as I got to feeling better I made it and then I remembered why I wanted to do it when I had folks around to share it with. I can't stop eating it. It is one of the best dishes I've ever made in my life. Persimmons are astringent in nature even after the acid has converted to sugar after they have been frosted on. So eating two cups of persimmon pulp in a bread pudding in three days sort of slows down the digestive tract in a way that is more information that you need to know. Dig it. I'm just a regular guy most of the time and regularity is a good thing as my mother said as she got older in life. I'm back to being a regular guy again and thinking of other occasions where I can share another batch of persimmon pudding and share the good stuff without eating so much we all pay the price for a few days later. Some of those friends that showed up for the cookout might have to support me in this effort during a fellowship event over the next few weeks.

It's great to look out the window of the loft beside my monitor and see the ridge to the north again. I love all seasons of the year here and feel a connection to the Earth and those that once lived here through these transitions. Perhaps autumn is the time of the year when I feel this connection the most. After several days of rain, high winds, and cloudy weather the sun is shining and it feels good to be outside breathing the crisp autumn air. It feels good to be sitting in the warm air of the loft punching in this message in the middle of the afternoon also. As I reflect back over the years and consider how my life has brought me where I am at today there are several things that I find that I never sought or expected. One thing is that I have been called upon to serve in the role of a traditional Elder amongst inter-tribal people of North and South America for over 13 years now. When I feel the ancient energy of those that used to live here in these mountains and know that I have very little knowledge compared to them with respect to this role, I feel inadequate and humbled. Many times I have been asked to travel to other parts of the world and share in the knowledge I refer to as "The Old Ways", but had to turn down the opportunity due to financial constraints. I don't get a check in the mail once a month because of my efforts to recover my indigenous heritage as part of my journey into recovery of addiction from drugs and alcohol. Often times I think people must think that this is how I am able to survive by the way they treat me, but I can't change their outlook or attitude towards this world. All I can do is live my life and know that my needs will be met so long as I am willing to honor my purpose in this world.

The other thing I didn't expect was to find myself in a financial situation where I had little or nothing in monetary terms with which to survive upon at this point in my life. I didn't design my life in this manner and I never took a vow of poverty as others on spiritual journeys have done. A year and a half ago a person signed a commitment to buy \$50,000.00 worth of art this year and next which was submitted with my application for the mortgage on this house as part of the divorce settlement. That person has the resources but has chosen to not fulfill that commitment, stating that during the year after signing that commitment they got back in touch with their Christian faith while visiting

with me and seeing the art work I do and listening to me relate aspects of my own faith and spirituality. I don't understand that change of heart or the impact it has had, but that's the way it is today. What I thought was going to be a very good opportunity for me to jumpstart the process and renew my relationship with art galleries fell through with no prior warning. In spite of this I am still here doing what I feel I am suppose to be doing and working through the challenges and struggles. I have a beautiful home to live and work in and around. I have a beautiful daughter to share my life with and spend time with. I have many friends that continue to love and support me in spite of my ability to make bad choices along the way. I have the ability to send out CD's with jpg's of art work on them to galleries and galleries are finally starting to accept this method of submitting examples of art work instead of reviewing work from slides. So it takes a lot less time to prepare packets of artist's materials and costs less also. I've started sending out these packets and am continuing to research future prospects where I can send these packets out. I love creating art and know that it is important for me to find places that can sell my work so I can continue to support this place, my daughter, and put food on the table.

At the moment the dial-up account is overdue, as are many other financial responsibilities in my life. I'm riding on borrowed time at the moment, but it comes with the faith and trust that it will all be worth it in the end. I might not be on-line for a while, but I will manage and return soon enough. Meanwhile here's a great quote that helps me keep my spirits up. Perhaps it'll help you.

Thought for Today

"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don't give up."

--Anne Lamott

### Children of the Gourd of Ashes

The blue-gold of my dreams  
The sweeping of seven into Seven  
And steep steep the sweep.

The Fair Child children singing war songs  
In the rain  
And anti-war songs  
In the rain

There is no double-speak  
There's only talk-speak  
And the wind blowing  
Some days it feels like I'm living in the eye  
Of a hurricane





About a month later the dialup and phone lines went dead. Maggie continued to enjoy the Christmas music we had purchased the year before. We got out the Christmas lights and decorations and did what we could to make it feel like home for the holidays one more time. While nursing the torn tendon in my right shoulder it was nearly impossible to cut firewood for winter. Besides, the chainsaw needed some maintenance on it that would require funds. The mortgage was back in foreclosure and moved much quicker this time, since the paper work had been done during the previous round. It looked like the auction would be sometime in January or February and there didn't appear to be any chance of anyone coming through with enough funds to help out.

I called my sister while the phone lines were still working and asked her if she knew of anyone in the family that could help out so I didn't lose the house and land. She told me flat out that no one in the family had any desire to help me out. It might have been true, or it might have been foolish of me to ask someone else. Anyway, that was as far as that conversation went. I really didn't expect anyone in my family to help out since they were not interested in my art or work to continue the family tradition as it had been passed down to me from my grandparents. They were all happy with their own lives and didn't need to be reminded of who their ancestors were. Alvin and the Chipmunks were playing on the stereo again. Maggie and I made presents to give to friends and family. We cooked a Christmas dinner and enjoyed it. On New Year's Eve I did another sweat lodge ceremony at midnight to welcome in the next calendar year. It was one of those times when it felt like the only person who cared if I lived or died was Maggie. A few weeks later with very little food, no firewood, and the well pump burnt out, I wrote an essay entitled "Rain Over The Lake".

It wasn't an easy year in spite of all the promise in the beginning. I was reminded of a situation one of my spiritual teachers had shared with me in my late teens. He had been assisting a woman who had genital warts through hypnosis. She wanted to have a family at some point in the future and this viral infection was putting that opportunity at risk. He told her that he would help her but under the condition that she discontinues any social contact with her when the work was completed. She agreed, although they were very good friends and it would mean not being able to visit each other or share in the future outcome of this effort. He explained that he would need to avoid using any voice tone while around her after the work was completed to avoid causing her to revert back to where things had been. He knew he could never control his voice on a constant basis in any situation. I understood that sometimes one has to discontinue interacting with the person that has gone through a healing process due to this risk. Most of the time I don't use a process that would cause this concern. Instead I use a method that goes back and finds the trigger that started the physical problem on a spiritual level. If we can defuse the trigger, the rest of the problem will clear itself. In most cases this means I learn something about the person they never intended to tell anyone. Deep dark secrets that should have gone to the grave with them come pouring out. Once the healing has been completed, they have very little incentive for me to remain around in case I might violate their confidence and tell someone the secret. Since the information is only of value if it helps them to heal, it is soon forgotten once the work is completed. There are far more important things to remember in this world than when someone's father kicked them across the yard as a child, or some other childhood trauma that we would all like to forget. The body doesn't forget.

The people of Africa are still eating improperly prepared monkey meat and HIV is spreading. When I considered the situation as it transpired and prayed about it, that still quiet voice whispered to disregard the situation, as far more important challenges are coming. Most issues with HIV have lifestyle issues related to them, as the voice continued. Most people would rather be victims than rise above the ashes of their failures in life and survive. Like Ruben Carter said, some of us are awake and it is best to let sleeping dogs lie. In the end those attempting to silence the voice of indignation against the negativity failed. Their insanity will bless them with anonymity as dust returns to dust.

Oliver Loveday © 06/30/09