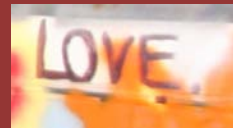


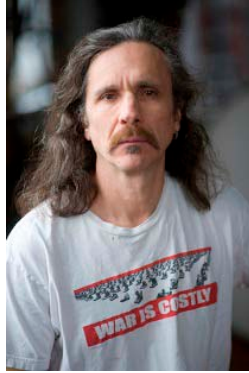
THE IDIOTS OF EDEN



By Mark A. Garcia



About the Author



Mark A. Garcia is a drummer, keyboardist, performance artist and song and story writer who drives vulnerable adults to work and back home again for a living (barely). He is domiciled in Pine City, MN on the Snake River with his wife Patricia McQuarry, dog Yuffie, cat Eddie and other less tame wildlife. They have two daughters Jamie and Riva who live in St. Paul and Minneapolis respectively. Mark has had songs played on local college radio, CD write ups in local rags, performed in venues/bars as a drummer/keyboardist, performed short pieces and plays of his own creation with/without his family, had a couple stories published in Whistling Shade.

He has written two e-books (taking place about thirty years apart) recalling his travels out west first as a single stoned drunken man in his late twenties and then as a sober but still poor and crazy married man in his mid fifties. Written with humor and poignancy and recalling some of the politics of the times, what these two 'memoirs' also have in common is the spontaneous adventure of being on the road and going where fate or mechanical mishaps take you and the amazing people-characters you meet when you leave yourself open.

His songs and lyrics are experimental, eclectic, sarcastic, sad and problematically poetic. They can be found at: <http://www.onetalkingshoe.com>

Prologue-

Our Idiots of Eden Partridge Family on Mushrooms 1974 Mercedes Benz MotorRoam Motor Home

I'm going to be telling some stories about our trip to the Rainbow Gathering in Fallsville Arkansas the week of July 4th, 2007 and then about a separate longer trip to Hot Springs, South Dakota in Sept. of the same year. You can see and will see more pictures of our hipped out tripped out 'bus' throughout and I'll be describing it in full detail in the first actual chapter so don't miss that. The engine starter fell out but not off on the first trip. We also had two flat tires which kept us trapped in a KOA (where you pay more and then really pay for it) straight out of the Twilight Zone. We also met some friendly bucktoothed Arkansas-sonians and some scary ones with WHITE REDNECK CONFEDERATE REBEL stickers on their huge double gun racked pickups. Our bumper stickers said "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind" (I was expecting to lose both) "God Bless the Freaks" (Whoops, not their God) and "Eve was Framed" (seemingly the most offensive) for starters. Speaking of (starters), like I said we lost ours and thought our travels were all over our first time out but then we discovered that because it was a manual transmission all we had to do was pop the clutch and away we'd go (comparisons to 'Little Miss Sunshine' though cute are a little off base since our RV is 25 feet long and weighs ten times their van). Of course, knowing what I know about mechanical things which you'll soon discover is next to nothing we had to pay in more ways than one before we made this discovery.

First off, we had to pay someone or find someone nice enough to hook up a chain and pull us so we could pop the clutch and secondly we drove all the way home from Alma Arkansas to Minneapolis without turning the engine off, before we realized all we needed was a hill/ small decline/push and away we'd go. The latter was the way we ended up traveling most of the way on our second trip (to South Dakota, in lieu of Oregon) when the starter actually died (I'll explain that later, too) we called it 'camping on a hill', most RV'rs want flat ground so we were usually able to get the spots we needed and when we got to Hot Springs, SD., a town that has 'Happy Water' running out of a spigot in the park, fifty parts Magnesium, Sodium and other healthy minerals to two parts Lithium (equals happy water equals nice friendly people), a town built on a hill, we were home!

That's all for now but I will continue soon with more details on our Arkansas trip which included a bust outside the Rainbow Gathering by Federal (FEMA trained) law enforcement agents, trying to find two hippie girls in a huge hippie haystack, details on the fallen starter and a young hero named Skippy and then after a short and much needed break back home on to Hot Springs where we met ("Don't pee in the Hot tub and watch out for the Fairies") Bill, who stole us from one campground on a hill to his 'Historic Log Cabins' on a bigger hill and the five nights we spent partying, playing music and barbecuing with people from around the world. Stay tuned.

CHAPTER 1

Arkansas and Bust

HEART GONE WRONG



May 2007

So; are we going to do it?

Yes, we are going to do it!

Do the thing everyone thinks about, talks about and then talk them-selves out of. The thing everyone hopes and fears. Hope and fear who like lovers start out walking hand in hand then overtime embrace, fight, take for granted, split up, put up with each other then hopefully and fearfully re-join heart born hands. We are dropping out, packing up, quitting, jobs, schools and mortgages. Ditching the extended family we stopped extending true feelings for or seeing long ago. God, I just want/ need to be happy. Is this a last ditch effort or a continuing new beginning? Am I running from the ever -present shadow of a dark cloud or embracing that inner rising sun? To see the sights before I can no longer see, to feel the joy while I can still feel, to hug the tallest tree, to sleep beneath the brightest star. To spend all my time with the ones I truly love, the ones who are a part of me. The ones I have hurt the most. The ones I've lived with before and to make sure I get it-make it right this time.

We can laugh, cry, and live with our whole hearts hanging not blocked by society's mundane soul numbing bank robbing cold material television idle-ling do what they've always done before non-existence. We will exist to live. Live to exist. Something for the memory books in our head. The greatest stories never told lain bare. We'll share them with anyone with an open ear, heart or mind.

Three of us: wife, husband, daughter (and two dogs if they both last that long). It's been-the three- throughout history. Musketeers, Stooges, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Stephen

Kings the 'Drawing of the Three' even that axis of evil and it's like-wise creators, good ole bad boys, George, Dick and Donald.

We've dubbed ourselves The Idiots of Eden or The Misfits of Babylon, take your pick, it's of no real concern though it is the ideology behind the title that keeps us inspired and conspiring. And there's the same ancient question; how do they (we) all stay on the same ever -turning page, in lock-step, in twined, in tune, insane? Hey, if sanity is living your life in fear, in denial and in debt waiting to have enough money to do what you've waited your whole life to do and then end up too old, too settled, too indebted, too tied down, too cold and six feet under, if that's sanity I'll leave mine for you. Sanities just another thing you can't take with you when you (it) go(s). Just another word for nothing left to lose. Like freedom and pure freedom is free no matter what those pre-mentioned warmongers say. We won't be paying for their war machines anymore, anyway, so put that in your gun barreled Christian cancer heart and choke on it.

'I am (we are) heading out no sad goodbyes, I am (we are) tilting towards forgiving skies and I (we) wonder why it took so long to right this (these) heart(s) gone wrong.'

Thank you love for taking me along! Thank you all for letting me take you along and now the journey, the new day begins.

The Idiots of Eden, you say, where the hell/heaven did that come from? First off, the word idiot is an endearment in our household. It does not suggest any degree of or lack of intelligence. My wife has a website entitled imarriedanidiot.com where she tells 'sad but true' stories of living with someone who is totally right-brained and I pontificate hare brained rebuttals. Now, Eden, I'm a little un-sure of. I have a problem with the idea of two fully developed human beings (white humans with nice haircuts according to most pictures, I mean all their missing besides clothes are a suitcase and vacuum cleaner un respectively) being here from the beginning and also when this supposed beginning actually took place. Billions of years of evolution reduced replaced by this no sense nonsense.

My idea of Adam and Eve goes more like this, Adam yells, "Hey, Eve, you want-a' see these bombs I've been building out back," Eve sighs "Sorry, Adam but the soaps are on and I think my face is beginning to crack." I mean with all that went down there with the snake and the apple, it's like God is some twisted control freak or a spokesperson for a medical insurance company saying 'eat this meat but stay away from that healthy apple.'

But then on the flip side there's the idea of a paradise of beautiful gardens, amazing animals, life everlasting (but don't eat the fruit), of un-interrupted non-competitive sex. Void of the hustle and bustle, of mortgage lenders, brokers, agents, bankers, lawyers, doctors, CEO's, politicians, insurance companies, IRS agents, Reality T.V., New Country Muzac, KFC, McDonalds, priests and pedophiles (is that one word or two) and it sounds tempting to say the least.

Mainly though, it trips off the tongue nicely; the Idiots of Eden.

Babylon represents the city, the belly of the beast, or maybe the place you came from and have been at too long, a place of debt and regulations, of needs and repetition. A place to stand still, not dance.

So we're leaving, for a change, for a fresher outlook, to avoid bill collectors and to dance.



One Month earlier-April 2007

(As I promised earlier a full description of the traveling machine)

We bought this Class A 25ft 1974 Mercedes Benz, 5 speed, 4 cylinder Diesel motor-roam - motor home that they only made around one hundred and fifty of in the U.S.A. We thought it looked 'cool', real retro, it had green shag carpet and an eight track both of which we soon replaced. We should have known trouble was brewing, that a pretty package can hide an ugly truth. Like I said it was already 'one of a kind' then my daughter and her friends painted it up using spray paint, old car paint and made it truly one of a kind, looking now like Ken Kesey's second merriest prank, the Partridge family on L.S.D. or as my father in law said, (and he should know) ".....a moving target for every red neck in the country."

I could go on but the stories below will more visually and romantically paint you a picture of what this 'high hope on six wheels' came to mean to us.

June 2007

Our time is getting closer. Time is slowing down- speeding up, dependent on whether I'm working or not. I've been taking more days off (sick leave, I never took), desiring them, getting ready for the change, weaning myself off the tempting tits of society's hard rules, soft touch and pointed regulations. The people we tell say, "I wish I could do that", "I've always wanted to do that." Or then there's, "You're really going to do that?" Some of the former (friends and family members) could just be humoring us. Only strangers have no hidden agenda. Some of the latter are family members who are afraid; afraid for us, afraid to be called out for being afraid, for staying put, not taking the plunge or afraid of a phone call to come rescue us. I just want to enjoy the beauty in the day without that weight of getting up and going somewhere you hate to be. We are going to

do it, to prove it can be done, to lead the way. Prove that you don't have to be rich to retire and you don't have to be too old to enjoy it.

I am in love with the idea of spending real time with my wife (of fifteen years) Patty and our teenage daughter, Riva (I wish our older daughter Jamie could come too but she is stuck deep in the working world or as you read on maybe too sane to travel with her parents), just when most husbands, wives and children are moving apart, we are moving closer, together. Closed up in a confined space, our hearts will open up, for love breaks thru all space. "You're dreaming", you say. Maybe, but don't wake me yet, please, let me dream some more.

*I've been dreaming so heavy can't wait to dream care free.
Been living heavier- can't wait to live care free; free to care.*

June 8th, 2007

I quit my job as a letter carrier with the United States Postal Service. Today! Talk about hope and fear. There is no way I can go in to the details of what made this such a mind and soul robbing occupation (loneliness, repetition, meaningless, crazy co-workers, and demon supervisors). That's for another book I may never write. It's physically hard but that was the easy part in fact I used to pray for extreme weather conditions just to feel challenged, to feel un-comfortably numb, to keep my mind from wandering where it will go; fixing a hole in my soul. Enough said.

Leaving, finally-July 2nd, 2007 about 1 am Arkansas, "The Friendly Scary State"

We decided to make our first trip in the RV our first trip (our daughters second) to the Rainbow gathering, the annual hippie fest held every year in some different national forest the week before and after the fourth of July weekend; this year held in the Ozark National Forest in Fallsville Arkansas. The RV would fit in perfectly as long as we were in that 'rainbow world'. Outside of it, things varied, mostly very friendly people who like to talk about everyone else's business and ask personal questions to perfect strangers, this is what Minnesota nice would be like if it was nice and honest. Speaking of honest, if they didn't like the Motor home they let us know that too either with the disgusting looks on their faces or their hand/finger gestures. No Lutheran shyness, here. No just looking away or pretending they didn't notice this big strange moving rainbow with its unicorns, flowers, trees, hands coming out of clouds and books and women with fiery hair and provocative words.

July 3rd, 2007

We had no place to park our RV by the time we got to the 'gathering' (cars, buses, whatever, were parked all through the site by then and up and down the whole five miles of the sanctioned right side of the entrance road and then another couple miles in both directions on the road outside the entrance, most of them in the ditch, our vehicle was too

big to park like that) , so we dropped our daughter and her friend Trianna off partially inside, somehow got turned around and then proceeded to drive about twenty miles of steep hills and declines to find a campsite.

I finally (oops) noticed some flashing lights in the mirror, many lights, I was taken aback; tired, hopelessly naive and in much denial I guess and wasn't sure how to respond, there was nowhere to pull over, as I mentioned this is a four cylinder five speed twenty-five ft long loaded down RV (yes, painted up like a true hippie love drug machine, but that's beside the point, mister father in law) and it's barely moving up the hills. I'm in second gear crawling up then rolling down, the speed limit changing from twenty-five to fifty back and forth and I can never make it to the fifty, the speedometer only goes to a top speed of sixty and that's only possible on a straight freeway.

I hear this booming voice, rising seemingly from within the stifling air of the red neck sky. "Pull over now and do it safely, I need to speak to you, NOW." I still couldn't find a place to pull over and then finally I see a driveway on top of this one incline and pull in sideways.

I see now that there are about six squad cars and at least ten officers come up to us and the vehicle. The youngest looking officer, the one with the booming voice and hair as short as his patience is speaking angrily in my face telling me to get out of the vehicle, "You are in Arkansas now and you need to follow our rules, you need to pull over and let people through who are piled up behind you', (I didn't see anyone but them) and before I could speak, "Hey, don't speak when I'm talking, you're in enough trouble, got it!" "Show me your license, insurance, title". I had my license but we had left the title and insurance card at home along with a can opener, flash light batteries and as always enough socks and underwear for yours truly.

Suddenly, we started rolling back, the emergency brake wasn't holding. "If you hit my vehicle you'll be in a sorrier situation then you already are." My wife put her hand then foot on the brake as I got out, per orders.

The other officers were not as 'hard ass' as the main guy. I think the fire that was put in them by seeing this painted up love machine coming from the Rainbow gathering (where they were trying to bust people right and left but having a hard time with the numbers) was extinguished when instead of twenty completely stoned naked dirty lip-talking hippies falling out the doors there was a middle-aged fairly straight quite sober working class (ex-working class, yes, but recent enough to show through, ex-hippies, yes, but first time rainbow children) couple and one stinky very old bad-hipped unhip bandana-less dog. The 'hard ass' kept talking about how they do things in Arkansas and we were in trouble for not pulling over and letting people (again, meaning them) get by.

I tried to explain the four cylinder RV and the fact that there weren't any places to pull over but he didn't want to hear it and then asked if he could search the vehicle. Of course, my wife and others have told me again and again I should have said no but they

didn't see the look in this guy's eyes. He wasn't playing by any rules but his own. He had been hoping for a reason to bust some tripped out hippie head but any head would do.

I should mention here that my wife takes lots of vitamins, specially ordered high quality ones and also pure calcium/magnesium that is in powder form. There were two cabinets full of such items in the RV and I guess when the officers inside got a look at them (I stayed outside per orders/fear) there was a slight ruckus and rush of adrenaline until one of the officers who knew of or took such items himself spoke up, meanwhile I was talking to one of the guys outside about my former job at the post office back in Minneapolis Minnesota, it seems he had lived in Coon Rapids. It was obvious that all the officers but the one were feeling pretty foolish by now and just wanted to move on. He probably felt the same way but because of his extremely high testosterone imbalance reacted in a different manner.

The final thing I should mention about this incident, well, two things; first the dog Scooter, (the other one, Yuffie, was with the girls getting hippie-tized and playing in the mud) a small, half blind, totally neurotic cocker spaniel who barks at everyone and everything he doesn't see (included in his verbal repertoire was a loud frightening beaten seal yelp) was very protective of and usually clung to my wife, he got out of the RV when I did and never made a sound or even used the bathroom the whole time this was all going down. I believe he felt something was very wrong and his instincts scared him shitless and relayed to me, 'obey every word this federal officer says or should I say, barks'.

The last thing (which I almost forgot) has to do with forgetting, the good kind. I had forgotten that my wife does smoke a little pot now and then and if I would have thought about it I might have panicked at the thought not just of them finding it but of her worrying about it. Found out later she had hid it in a garbage bag that had our dirty clothes in it. A place no man wants to go.

We received a ticket for no proof of insurance and impeding traffic, (going to slow), then suddenly they went flying off to bust some real hippie head.

July 4th-6th, 2007

The above ordeal being over we went looking for and found a campsite in the dark (we always seem to leave at night and arrive in the dark every time we travel anywhere, it's our family tradition), where there were fire flies everywhere we looked. Later, as we were getting cozy we noticed them all over the inside of the RV, so we had sex by fire-fly light. There was no evidence of them the next morning but we did discover we were close neighbors to a beautiful river and a huge American flagged camper-trailer minus the owners. We stayed another night. The next morning the owners arrived complete with 'white rebel' bumper sticker and pickup and so we snuck out, which is hard to do in a noisy psychedelic five speed diesel motor home.

We went back to the gathering heading back up (mostly) and down all those hills again to look for Riva and her friend. As you will later discover, along with my wife and child, we did all this hard driving with only one of two gas caps, no radiator cap (I didn't have the heart or balls to tell her I had lost the caps at our first stops) and at least two low tires. The gathering was still too full but we found a place to park just inside the entrance meaning I had to walk the 4.5 miles down to the site and proceed to look for two hippie girls in a hippie haystack. "I'm looking for two teenagers, one with dreads the other with blonde green hair, their names are Riva and Treanna." I got some strange looks and laughter from even the straightest rain-bowers.

Besides the red-neck cops surrounding the place waiting for anyone stupid enough to leave alone, it had rained all but one day and since it was in a National Forest where the sun could not truly shine the whole place was one giant mud-hole, every-step you took was a squashy sticky step. I saw people with flip flops, sandals, no shoes, crutches, and cuts, whatever. Some were covered from dreaded head to painted toe. I had my big high top work boots on and after a couple hours it didn't matter, they were toast. I was walking around for hours, back and forth from the kid village where they were supposed to be to any other sites I could find, slow marching to the beat of the many coinciding drum circles, my steps creating their own percussive slurping rhythm, one site (called appropriately enough Montana Mud, per the coffee) was across the river, the bridge had washed out so they had a rope across it and people were there helping others across. I must have crossed it a dozen times.

This river was like the Sunday sermon at your local Catholic church, with promises of everlasting cleanliness though as soon as you stepped away you were stuck again in the muck and the mud. Though here, unlike your local church, I was surrounded by tie-dyed remnants of a not so distant past and beautiful, musical, voluptuously uninhibited naked people and mud.

Finally, it was getting dark and I knew that being nearsighted/ blind in the dark I would be no good out there and felt fairly confident that the girls were alright. The majority of the people were quite peaceful and friendly and would look out for those who weren't, of course we weren't even a hundred percent sure if they had made it in since we dropped them off on the road going in with a total stranger we had picked up on the way there, who I did see inside, but he hadn't seen them since they got in, (this reminds me of one other thing about our bust, one of the cops asked me about this guy we picked up which made me worry a little about him but more concerned that they were watching us all day, hours before they pulled us over for supposedly impeding traffic) but there were people all over the road at that time so again I tried to convince myself that they were safer there than in the 'outside' world of small-town red (necks), white (powered pickups) and blue (ribboned-beer) northern Arkansas. A place where we got pulled over and were scared for our lives just for driving around town in our sixties love boat with the bumper stickers 'Bless the Freaks' (blasphemous), 'Honor the Dead, Respond with Peace' (un-patriotic), and again the most seemingly dangerous; 'Eve was Framed'.

So I went back empty handed to our moving pagan billboard where my wife and I tried not to worry and drift off to sleep.



CHAPTER 2

KOA not AOK, Fallen Starters, Skippy to the Rescue

July 6th, 2007 *continued*

Now I mentioned they have different camps at the Rainbow gathering, one of which was 'Jesus Camp' located just inside the entrance, which we ended up parking just across the road from, meaning Jesus Camp was even farther away from the others than 'A' (Alcohol/Assholes) camp which is always put at a safe distance. Every year some poor stoned peace loving fool stumbles into 'A' camp and gets beaten up. But somehow that's less scary than being fed, comforted, sung and preached too. I guess the whole time I was gone they were singing Jesus songs along with songs that weren't initially Jesus songs but with a few lyrical changes were now. At first my wife thought it was pretty but soon she started playing our own CD player filled with a collection of mostly sac-religious rock-pop and then getting out her guitar and playing her own repertoire consisting of some apropos things like "Stairway to Heaven" and "Here comes the Sun" but also a couple songs from 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch', a movie musical about a transvestite rock n roll singer who got his 'tool' cut to an inch instead of all the way in order to escape east Germany with an older black man who liked his tight white.... anyway, not quite Jesus Camp material however you sliced it.

By the time I got back they were rather quiet and we got ready to sleep but woke to the sound of "Slow down, hey, where are you going", very consistent and quite loud. It seems the other thing we hadn't considered is that the entrance is also the exit and since the gathering was coming to an end, some of the people who had hitch-hiked there from all around the country (and who made it up the 4.5 mile entrance road) were trying to get a ride home. They were determined. "Hey, SLOW DOWN, where are you going"?

These people did not sleep and therefore we didn't either. Eventually we did but woke to that same refrain, the voice's now harsh, fried, strained but still strong "Slow down, where you headed, all right, thanks." And the Jesus freaks sang "Here comes his SON" and "Dododododododo, dododododododo take a walk on Jesus' side"

Later that next day, (I got a ride most of the way down from some guys from Canada who were really late) I found the girls after a few more hours of walking around. They looked a little worse for wear, including the dog, seems she had thrown up on their sleeping bags and clothes and was suffering from culture shock acting for the next few days like someone had spiked her water bowl. Doggy come- down.

Anyway, I get back with the girls and Patty wasn't there, (timing is everything), tired of waiting she had gone down to the site with the old dog and so we waited for her a few more hours till we were all together again and finally left the rainbow children behind (except for a couple hitch hikers who were going to the next town/hospital - some guy who got lost and wound up in A camp) with many "loving you and welcome home, next year" goodbyes.

July 7th-9th, 2007

We headed out looking for the nearest campsite and since we were all mud; clothes, dogs and motor home we decided to do a KOA even though we had sworn we would steer clear of them but the temptation of a pool and Laundromat was too strong. It was still over a hundred degrees for Gods sake. The people stared at us as we pulled in. They gave us the spot closet to the entrance, inquired if we had come from the hippie gathering and asked with God fearing eyes, what that hand coming out of the clouds meant? The old man and his grandson who worked there were both overly interested in the young girls, "How old are they?" "Are you really hippie girls?", "How long will you be staying?" *Not long at all if you keep asking such questions.* The grandson going so far as telling us, with his grandmother (who ran the place) at his side that he was seventeen and going through those hormonal changes.

We woke up to two flat tires, both on the right passenger side. We had been for-warned before we left that the tires we had were not your run of the mill and would be hard to replace which was doubly true since we were in the middle of northern Bum-fuck Arkansas and it was a Friday afternoon. Everybody had gone home for the weekend and if we wanted a tire before then we'd pay big-time for it, which we did. A guy came up and took the tires off. He was able to repair one tube but the other was in threads. No problem we figured, since we had a spare. I started to take the spare from where it was but couldn't quite figure out how to get it off so I had the 'tire guy' look at it and he said in that wonderfully sleepy southern drawl, "That's weird, it looks like they welded the spare to the frame, the only way to get that off is to break the weld which could wreck the tire, hmmm, that's strange." Just as we feared no one had tires of that size and it being Friday and this being the south, no one was open anyway. There was one place that could order one but it would not be in till Monday morning.

(I will mention here that when we got back a friend who has helped us with the RV and in fact helped put back in the starter you will be hearing about momentarily also showed me, after commenting on Arkansians close family relations, how easily the spare tire came out; the turn of a screw if I remember right).

Why couldn't I have figured that out you ask; it's a question of man vs machine (a screw is a machine) and in my case the machine always wins, it's something I will try to explain a little later, we will also dig a little deeper into the ancient soul (and the question of whether it has one) of that 1970's Mercedes engine; it's all about drive, mans and machines. In the end the blame always comes down to man for machines don't create themselves, of course blame is also mans creation and we love to blame others before ourselves.

I mentioned the creepy/grumpy/dopey not bashful relatives of those who ran the KOA, Kamp grounds Of America, representative of America I suppose; a creepy carbon copy business venture that tries to beat nature at its own game but ends up being as natural as a Wall Mart parking lot and near as expensive as a Motel 6, and that strange spelling does that signify something about Ameri-ka? My wife and daughter were suspicious of waking up there with the flats after we were asked "How long are you staying with us?" But I think it had more to do with the fact they were not filled properly, they were old and we had just driven nine hundred miles in mostly ninety degree weather. You can't blame a machine or another man/woman for your own on-doing for it is your own fears, denial, knowledge or lack of that is the true driving force in stalling out or moving ahead in life as it is in this continued story. So let's get to it.

We really needed to get away from the Kamp -ground for a while and needed to pick up some groceries so I decided to go down to town and find a grocery store. I took the girls with me and Patty stayed with the dogs. We debated this a bit because we were minus one tire. Now in the back you have duals on each side so there were still three tires back there, which means five tires altogether which is one more than any car has any way you look at it, the three of us were looking at it like we really had to get the hell out of there, well, in the case of the teenagers, really not looking at it at all.

Teenage thought process: "Tires, who needs tires, let's just go". The problem was I understood that 'thinking' process.

We found the grocery store we were looking for right down the hill, some chain they don't have here in the Midwest. We parked and turned off the RV with no real clue as to the events to follow, this being back when turning off the vehicle was like taking a piss; easy, un-stressful, natural. We got our groceries and enjoyed the air-conditioning since outdoors it was still ninety in the shade with nowhere to hide. When we got back to the RV, I pushed the starter button, a few clicks and nothing. I mentioned this was a diesel and very old, it had no glow lights, you started it by putting the key in the ignition and then pushing this black button, holding it for a second or two, if it didn't start right away

you'd stop, wait a bit and try again. So I waited a bit, took a deep breath, tried again, nothing, nothing but that sick sinking feeling and maybe a few choice words the girls were just old enough to hear. Like I said this was the beginning of a new phase to our adventures. Bringing it up a notch, like we didn't already have enough stories to tell or our motorized home wasn't unique enough.

Enter Skippy, not quite Superman, in fact he looked like Clark Kent had pretended to act but he was willing to go that extra step, get dirty or just inquisitive with some time on his hands or maybe he wasn't that bright meaning he wasn't just out for himself, whatever the reason he was the only one who bothered looking under the RV. I had called a number of numbers from a local directory I had been given, all sending me on to the next number, some not open on the weekend or not able to get to it till two weeks from next? A couple actually came out and looked at the battery compartment, (the batteries were not under the hood but in a compartment on the lower side of RV, a compartment that was stuck and had to be pried open with multiple screwdrivers every time) fooled with a few things, told us 'Good Luck' and left; it was Friday afternoon after all.

There were people coming and going constantly from the store parking lot but none were willing to help, they either tried to ignore us or gave us dirty looks, finally a couple half drunk half Mexican- Native American guys in a battered pickup stopped by. This was after the two girls decided we had nothing to lose and to play all our hippie playing cards by whipping out there instruments, instruments they were not yet familiar with, mandolin and violin respectively. The men made some requests... and tried jumping the RV but neither was taking so we bid them farewell. I made my last call before my cell phone beeped its final laughing deadly beep it was to a truck service company and thus entered Skippy. He started out like all the others saying the batteries were charged, the cables tight and clean and should be working fine, he was not so sure of the metal box in the battery compartment, the solenoid called by some, not recognized by others (we will discover it's true nature later), a strange and ancient looking thing with cables coming out going here, there and everywhere. As I've mentioned before all things in an engine even a small one look strange to me so this metal box was quite frightening, the kind of thing that would keep me up at night wondering what it does, how it works and how it kills everything around it. I can relate to a story of a killing car like Stephen Kings 'Christine' or 'From a Buick Eight' because they are monsters and ours was bigger, more complicated and unfathomable if that's possible, then any I had encountered before. Beautiful, yes, but frightening.

Anyway, Skippy was barely out of his teens and he traveled with two kids who were barely in their teens, (workers rights laws not being feasible or applicable in this part of the country I guess, along with dental care). Skippy had huge buck teeth on top of his southern drawl but I didn't need to understand everything coming out of that twisted mouth to know that we were in serious 'doo doo' when I heard him say from down under "I'm sorry to tell you this but you got a big problem here."

Have you ever heard the saying "I felt like my heart dropped out, or my heart sank like a

stone", well, that begins to describe the feeling I had. There are moments in life when you truly are over whelmed, now the fact that I have had other moments like this did prepare me from totally losing it also some of those moments/events were more personal in nature involving the loss and or hurting of loved ones. This did not rise to that level, it was a material thing but it's hard to see it that way when you are a thousand miles from home, know nothing about fixing any part of your mechanical monster and you have a wife, two teenage girls (one not yours) and two hungry out of control dogs relying on you.

We had very little actual cash on hand and the plastic money was limited; remember, we weren't on a normal vacation. I had quit my job due to going postal (it's not just a cliché, it's a lifestyle), I had a limited amount of money in a retirement fund and an employers thrift savings plan that was in stocks, not much in either since I had only been there seven years and didn't even know of it till I was over a year in. What was left couldn't be accessed yet since I needed to fill out paper work back home and then wait four to six weeks for it to arrive in the account. We got the motor home through a home equity loan through a separate (purposely) bank account that was now completely dry; hardboiled. Are you getting the picture? Through the years we had used up family loans, loans we had eventually paid back but with a high interest payment of pride and guilt riddled reminders. We hadn't paid our home mortgage in months the payments rising constantly and beyond our reach even on my postal salary and now! To cut to the chase, no next egg; the fox had left the hen house in tears of laughter. We were spending our 'golden years' funds barely in our fifties as we went blindly along.

I'm just giving you a piece of the broken puzzle, the back horror story that was going on in the back of mind when good old man boy Skippy said "Holy, Shit, I hate to be the one to tell you this but you got a big problem here." "Looks like your starter has fallen out."

I think I've set this next bit up fairly well, I mean you know of my mechanical retardation, my machinery fear and that our situation was desperate. I used Skippy's phone to call Patty and tell her the news and we started talking alternative moves, making last chance choices like calling u-hauls/rental cars and more or less abandoning our second home. She'd had a confrontation of her own back at the campsite, the grandpa guy had cursed her out seems he had come over to our site while she was in the shower thinking that we had just taken off without paying for that day. What he saw was that one of the benches of the picnic table was broken, a tent was set up which was against KOA rules, probably some dog crap lying around and the girls swimming garments were hanging in the trees (the grandson was gone by this time otherwise he may have confiscated those).

He didn't see the electrical phone socket thing hanging off the board where the RV had been (still) plugged in, when we took off for the store. Whoops. Not a happy camper host. Patty told him we were coming back and he better not complain about the picnic table bench because it had broken when she sat on it and therefore a safety hazard.

We decided we couldn't stay down in this part of the country any longer. Skippy had

made it clear that they would have to take the whole engine, transmission and kitchen sink out to put in the new starter and it would have to be welded (why are southerners obsessed with welding) off and on, welded not with just metal or steel but cast iron....in other words expensive and specialized.

Now this is when Skippy asked the magic question, the question I would have known to ask if I knew anything at all about motorized vehicles, knowledge that could have kept me from making all those panicky calls on his phone.

He said, "Is this a manual transmission"? I actually knew the answer, "Umm, yes", when Skippy told me that all we had to do was pop the clutch, I thought 'that's great' then I thought about how I could fuck it up. We had this 1987 Honda civic back home (we traded it before we left for a Honda 1000 watt generator) and whenever the battery died all you had to do was pop it, that's all. But I couldn't do it, every time I tried it wouldn't go, I either didn't have the clutch in right or I let it out too soon or I didn't give it enough gas, something always went wrong. Patty could do it no problem, the dog could have managed it I suppose, I really tried but I got nervous, stressful and doubtful and that was that. Now here I was all on my lonesome except for the girls neither one of who could legally drive the thing an inch (but now that I think of it probably could have popped the clutch). It was all on me I had to pop the clutch on this many eyed monster.

Skippy rigged up a chain after rigging up the starter and I got rigged and ready in my mind. No pressure, just our whole salvation was at stake. I couldn't help thinking I was going to fuck up in front of my daughter, her friend, Skippy, his young friends, every customer in the parking and the whole macho world. He told me I should signal when the bus started up so I wouldn't run into him, great, another thing to think about but then I saw that that was the solution; quit thinking, all this time I'm thinking (there I go again) that I'm an idiot because I can't do (understand) these simple mechanical things when the truth is, I'm too smart, yes, that's it, I have to empty my mind and just do it. Now I don't remember what gear I had it in, I believe it was second but it could have been third or first (though first is never really used since it's not necessary unless you're stuck on a rough grade/ steep hill situation). I wasn't sure how fast we needed to go, so....stop thinking, away we went and I just did it, hit everything right on the mark, held the pedal in, got up some speed, let it out and the engine started right up, I was so flabbergasted,(always wanted to use that word) that I almost forgot to signal Skippy to stop, 'honk the horn, yes, that was the signal, keep the engine running, open up the throttle, put the clutch in neutral, perfect!' Skippy un-hooked us, charged me sixty bucks for all his time and away we went with his number in tow in case we needed him for that tomorrow, since, if you're keeping up here we still needed to wait a day to get that tire put on.

He told us where the tire place was and that it would be a good spot to park for the night and get a pull or push in the morning. We went back to the campsite and got all our stuff together, picked up most of the dog shit, made the electrical hookup box look like it was still together, paid them for the day and got the hell out of KOA country.

July 9th-10th, 2007

We spent the night at the tire place, they didn't have the right tires but told us of another place so we called Skippy and got pulled again to pop the clutch, almost ran into a chain strung across part of the parking lot but the kids saw it at the last minute, went and got the tires put on and headed, without turning off the engine or hardly stopping, home. We pulled up in front of our house exactly a week and one day from when we left.

The amazing thing about taking these trips and another reason why I don't regret leaving my 'good paying career job' is that I was able to fool with time, to slow it down which is quite a trick. I mean more happened in that span of time than the seven years on my job. It is something we spend our whole lives trying to do, stand beneath the first cool drops of the fountain of youth. If you lived on and on that way for years imagine how full, how inspired, your life would be.

We had driven over a thousand miles nearly straight thru. Before we left I had asked a friend of mine to burn me some Neil Young CD's, I wanted as much music as I could have and I knew he had some Neil's. He showed up the day before we left with over twenty CD's, some he went out and bought, all Neil. I think I played them all on the way home, my daughter was falling in and out of sleep during part of the trip and I hear her say, dreamily "How many Neil Young's do you have"? A lot of the time she stayed up front with me when her Mom needed to rest. We always wanted two people awake which worked most of the time. Rivas young friend Treanna actually slept the whole way home, one of the perks of being that age, you don't even have to go the bathroom, how wonderful that must be.

We live in the heart of the city, the belly of the beast some say and maybe that is closer to the comparative body location. They don't allow vehicles of a certain size on the streets, we had paid our neighbor to park in her driveway before we left but didn't want to bother her at 1 in the morning so we got most of the stuff out of the RV took a chance and went to sleep, slept till late afternoon, woke up to find a ticket on our windshield. Welcome home indeed!

CHAPTER 3

Oregon Or The Closest Place With Lithium In The Water, Don't Pee In The Hot Tub, Camping By Hill

Random thoughts, I wrote on the road, reducing everything on first trip (from previous chapters above) to one paragraph:

We've been traveling. We've gotten stopped and ticketed just for being. We've been separated from our daughter and her friend. We've made love a lot. Life is different.

Life is a new adventure every day. Felt the beauty, seen the ugly. The frightened soul less cop, that look in his eyes spreading a cold sad fear like a dry iced tear, the burnt out hippie drunk hanger on lost in-by time. The bibbed blue-jeaned buck toothed good hearted southern rebel, the retail clerk dysfunctional family gossip queen selling telling all through that tabloid look in their eyes. Two flats and a fallen starter. I popped the clutch.

We drove two days straight, got another ticket. Welcome home.

(We have no pictures of our Arkansas trip, we took many of the RV before we left and have many documenting our second trip, that you'll be hearing about shortly, but we must have forgotten the camera along with the title, insurance and my socks and underwear or maybe we were just too busy with all the continual chaos to take a snapshot, regardless we need to rely on our memories and descriptions such as those above and below, which seems fitting since we were running from modern life and driving old school)

Some descriptions of our first trip:

Like being stuck on a crazy carnival ride for the run of the circus.

Like a hurricane coming at you knocking you around then leaving you wide-eyed and closer than ever.

The longest eight days many people have ever known.

Like the Beatles, "Eight days a week" "Hard Days night" "Twist and Shout" and "Dizzy miss Lizzy" all rolled into one.

Like the enormous stunned smiling kick you'd get hearing Lennons voice singing all those songs rolled into one.

The most perfect "One day we'll look back on this and it will all seem funny".

Peoples reactions to our stories:

Lots of head shaking and un-easy laughter

July 10th -Sept 24th, 2007

Back Home

We spent the rest of July and all of August back home working on getting the starter put back in, brakes, tires, plumbing checked and waiting for more of my employer TSP (thrift saving plan) money to come in. I had filled out the form wrong so right when we thought it was coming we were told I had to fill it out all over again. Our mechanic guy got the starter put back in without having to take the whole engine out (like we were told by half of Arkansas), the hardest part was taking the starter studs (lingo for bolts) out and the even more time consuming finger cramping process of putting them back in one micro-inch at a time. The two of us cramped down under. I was able to help with this. I can help as long as I'm told what to do repeatedly and without being expected to understand what I'm doing. Of course my ignorance can be a hindrance too like not remembering an

important piece that had fallen off and Skippy had found until I seen it in the RV the day after we had been working on it and also when I informed Mark (the mechanic) after another day of crawling around down under that, yes, you could access the engine from inside the vehicle and sure enough most of the starter was within easier reach.

I need to go back and tell a story of my youth that may help explain things you've just read or that are coming ahead. I fell out of a tree when I was around ten years old. I liked to climb around a lot when I was young. We lived beneath a cliff on the west side of St. Paul and then later on top of a higher bluff overlooking the downtown St Paul skyline. There were lots of caves around, open then but now closed so I had plenty of inspiration for reaching up, digging in, climbing out, feeling high, damp, dark, squeezed, exposed, on the edge of danger.

I was climbing this tree that was at the bottom of the cliff on the edge of our backyard and I slipped, I remember watching it happen or feeling it was about to happen in those dreamy slow-mo mini- seconds we have at such times. There was a stone wall a few feet high that this tree was on and that's what I remember falling towards, I then recall walking in the door of the house but not from the tree to that point. I don't recall any cuts or blood. I was confused and I don't recall crying or raising a fuss which most kids do when they have such a great opportunity for attention. When I think back I realize that this was not to long before my parents divorced and I know now that they had a lot on their minds in particular my Mom who might have already met the man that would be her second husband.

My parents put each other through college, both being the first in their families to go there. My Mom was teaching English and my Dad was busy working and going to college to get his degree in teaching music. I mean how much do we really know or care about what are parents are going through when were kids, they live their lives so much for our benefit and it's not till we have our own kids we start to wonder and understand? As parents we give up so much but is it truly for them, their wants and needs, or our own need to want to run away from on our own dreams and failures?

Anyway, I had definitely blacked out and was in an altered state for a while, we were going to our grandparents, my mom parents, for dinner which we did most every Sunday, my grandfather was a butcher and so we were guaranteed a full meat-filled meal that my folks could not always afford. On the way there I asked, more than once "Where are we going?"

Things slowly became clearer but I believe to this day that things changed for me and I have never been the same as before that fall. A creeping sadness, a nagging dark cloud, deeper space-out scattered brain syndrome. Was I happier before? Was I capable of clearer, more concise thought? I can't be sure but I believe so, of course divorce soon came into the picture and blew the Leave to Beaver, Ozzie and Harriet television picture out of the water and maybe a part of my mind went then too. The innocence of the fifties

became the turbulence of the sixties and my life was coinciding with the times but was I more vulnerable due to the fall?

We all have great falls, Adam and Eve had a fall, Humpty Dumpty too, both fairy tales true, but there are many true falls by good true people and some never get back up.

I've had others since mostly alcohol related (another divorce byproduct?) but the things that happened in my mind just after my parents divorce and before any drug use at all are hard to explain. Broken chairs, shattered windows, busted walls were all in the near future. Do I need to explain? My hands, the utensils of my anger, my anger built up, my hands young and strong, the bedroom shrinking, sounds enlarging, the wind loud as a moving train and the florescent lights in every store a catalyst. Yelling, endlessly repeating, "I wanna go HOME", "Red dogs, Blue dogs, Black dogs too." The former any amateur shrink could get, the latter, I don't know, maybe, the black lab, Sam, we had left behind, the same old story, "We brought him to this farm where he can run around, you know how he liked to run around." Another casualty of the divorce war since my Mom was a cat person, which I then grew to dislike and eventually be allergic too. It's amazing how we make ourselves sick.

My Mom, my brother and I moved to a new town, new 'father' in tow, a white bread-bred suburbia and me just entering Junior High, talk about mental stress! Then an EEG scan, (minor) epilepsy diagnosed. Legal drugs were prescribed. Dilatin being one, I recall, also being more paranoid, withdrawn. Some of the symptoms described above happened before or after the medication? So what does this have to do with anything, we'll maybe I wasn't able to keep my job because of that first fall maybe that's why I haven't been able to keep a job for more than five to seven years at a time, the repetition gets to me more then it seems to get to others, of course I don't drink anymore or use drugs and that's a part of it. I believe most people need to drink/use drugs to keep working in their jobs otherwise it would blow their minds to realize the meaningless, mundane -ness of it all. Or maybe it-the fall- explains the total lack of common sense or understanding of anything mechanical, technical, linear.

Then music came into my life, it had been there earlier but now the music saved me, the music took me away; those album covers an opening, a peek at a new world, the look, the feel, the smell of the vinyl. I could look forever, get lost inside. Then listening and truly losing myself, all the bad self gone replaced with something resembling salvation and hope. I needed to create my own, to bang it out, so I started out on drums and used those hands, that anger to good use. Then I needed to write it out, thoughts, words, same thing, the hands, the grief, the anger. Now though, after all these years it brings anger, frustration to create because it seems to be for naught and I can't find the time or the energy I need and it hasn't saved me or if it has maybe I wish it hadn't. "I wish it hadn't", what a sad thing to say. And now it's the moving on that saves me and the dreams, yes, the dream world, very intense, very new, with lots of songs words melodies and no care for who hears them, for they are heard everywhere in the dream world though when you

wake you realize it's only you and you realize how alone we really are. They are a companion in your dreams, a companion... peace.

We sleep alone so many years of our life, in other cultures they don't, in other cultures they grow up slower, stay intimate longer. We are pulled away so soon and boys sooner still. Pushed away, we learn to push away from the heart. Pulled away, we learn to pull away from the true self, the spirit. Pushed; into work, into houses, into debt. I decided to pull out of the driveway. Push inward, than drive away. Drive away. Drive AWAY. My drive has died away. Don't push my drive away. My drive is all that keeps me here today. Otherwise, it's a dead end, or a lonesome endless cul-de-sac.

July 24th, 2007

We took off on our second trip between the first quarter and the full moon, of course it was about one in the morning, no matter how hard we tried to leave earlier it's seems the early morning stars want to be our traveling companions, our guiding lights along with that rising arena moon. We had more music this time and even got the two speakers in back going so now we were quadraphonic; cheap tinny quad.

Driving when no else is (except the truckers, lots of truckers) and when it's cooler is not so bad but you can only go so far before you get too tired. My wife had helped drive back from Arkansas when we were under the gun but she hadn't rested enough at this point. So we stopped at a rest stop in Worthington, Minnesota about one hundred miles from the Dakota border and even less from Iowa.

Our plan, the one we told everyone about was to go to Oregon. Ashland, Oregon to be exact, they have a Shakespearian festival there and of course there's the ocean and the mountains and lots of liberals to admire our motor home. And there is also lithium in the water which makes for happy campers.

If you have any imagination at all you may suspect that our plans no matter how hoped for and talked about were changed. I'd like to say something here about lost dreams, there is a deep sadness to it, a disappointment especially when others are involved, particularly hard when it's your children you think you've let down, you believe you feel their sadness in you but the young are more adaptable and the truth is we can't control or change destiny, ours or theirs, all we can do is begin the journey, take the step, try to lead, open the door and let fate take over.

We rested about five hours then got ready to go, I put the key in and pushed the starter button.....a few clicks but it wasn't turning over unlike my mind which was going full throttle,

'OK, the starter has been put back in the vehicle by a professional and a friend and it looks like it is still properly there.'

'It started every time, no problem (the month or so) while we were back home waiting to

go, 'maybe it's the batteries even though those are all brand new, bought before our first trip?'

'How 'bout the CD player, we'd been playing it non-stop but we're told that that use's very little power?'

'We were running the fridge but that runs on the deep cell battery which is supposed to be separate from the two engine batteries?'

I was talking to myself; my un-sure, non-mechanical, why am I doing this- who do I think I'm fooling- should have kept delivering mail like a rat lab monkey robot self. I tried again, nothing but a dull click coming from that many steely-eyed monster hanging out below with the batteries, I tried again, nothing, nothing but my familiar feelings of frustration, anger, denial, grief all mixed together fucking with my head and heart and intestinal tract.

So, again, this trip repeats the last, like a contemporary country/ easy listening chorus or like being hit on the head over and over (is there a difference). I went to find the caretaker and tell him I needed to use the phone to call a service truck, again, to tow our vehicle, again, to get it checked out, again, we are in the middle of nowhere, again, it is the weekend, again, we are traveling with limited funds and no way to access more till we get back home again; again.

The closest guy's about fourteen miles away, he's an older man and I'm worried about what he thinks of the RV, the paintjob. This is the price we pay and it's ended up being worth it, for the other price would be compliance, fear, slaves' to the status quo. I mean I could have told my daughter, no, you can't paint this thing up with strange pictures and words because we will be judged and we'll upset people and it may hinder us from getting help when we need it. Of course, I couldn't do that for the sole reason that I would be a hypocrite and an ass and I would have had it all wrong anyway, people were drawn to help or in the case of the old service truck guy (as in the case of Skippy) he never said a word about it. It was like we had a normal generic RV. My theory is that if they're going to charge you money for some kind of service then they don't make any personal comments to you. I mean we were the customer and the customer is always right even if in my case he's almost always wrong.

He hooked us up, pulled us and I popped the clutch (perfectly again) and we followed him to his station. He was another guy who was not afraid to get his hands dirty and check things out, he also thought the batteries were find and admitted that if it was something to do with that metal box then it was beyond his knowledge which was light years from mine. He told us of a repair shop about ten miles back 'with the knowledge' and of three different campsites that were between here and there since it was the weekend and nothing was open till Monday.

July 25th-27th, 2007

Talk about your life-changing moments, it was around this time that we first realized we

didn't have to be pulled by a truck, that all we needed was a decline, a hill of any size and very little speed was needed, which was cool because getting towed was becoming a pain for all involved, though we found plenty of good people who did it for nothing, one guy, besides Skippy of course, even twice. He was the caretaker at the campground we stayed at while we waited for Ron's repair shop to open, we couldn't reach the electric plug-in and still be close enough to the edge to roll out so we just turned it off and hoped we'd find some friendly neighbors with a truck or just some big friendly neighbors. That night I dreamed my niece and her husband, who is a big guy and his even bigger brother were with us, I awoke to my wife, teenage daughter, two definitely not sled dogs and my scrawny self. Patty told me to go make some friends but again it was that perfect timing we were so good at, I had stalled and now the weekend was almost over and everyone was leaving. Two guys I talked to had lots of advice and like most others were amused by our story and the uniqueness of our motor home. This was a recurring theme and something we also found quite humorous but not at the time, like being the butt of a joke everyone on the outside looking in gets a kick out of while sighing with relief "Thank God, that's not me.", which is what I would have said had I had the luxury.

Speaking of advice, advice is like opinions, everyone's got one, along with and including assholes and idiots' who make blanket statements like "Your spare tire is welded to the frame."

Anyway, come Monday and time to go, the grounds keeper pulled us with his truck and I popped the clutch perfectly (a positive *déjà vu*). We went down to dump the waste and I ended up letting out the clutch, bam, stalled out, we all let out a moan, a groan, a cursed sigh. Now this was the first time I did that in all these days of traveling with no starter. I made this clear to my wife, daughter and everyone back home who we told this story too, that that was the one and only time I stalled the thing unintentionally. Let me repeat that....

So we dumped the crap and then I called the guy again, he didn't answer so I went up the road and found him and asked him 'can we get another pull.'? This was actually the last time we needed a pull for we were getting the camping on a hill bit down to an art and found some perfect spots further on along the way. As you may have guessed Ron's Repair wasn't able to get us what we needed which was a new starter, they said Rapid City was the only place around to get one or most likely we'd have to order one from the west coast, remember this was a 1974 Mercedes Benz so some parts were not easy to come by, either way Rapid City was farther west which was the direction we were headed,- *oh you're thinking the starter again I thought you fixed that problem-* but this time it was still intact, just dead, it must have gotten worn out from all the action, use and attention it got on the last trip, the other Mark and I (mostly the other Mark) had put it in good and tight but it just got tired of starting.

I was starting to believe that we could travel the whole country this way if we had the balls to take the chance. It would be quite an experiment, a news-worthy story, relying on others/ our own luck/initiative. The desert would not work to well; some parts of the

country our hillier then others. But many parts of the west are perfect, in Hot Springs, South Dakota (our decided back up destination) the whole town is on a hill so wherever we went, the grocery store, the spa, we always had a place to park, just turn off the RV and not worry about a thing, baby. Things started going a little smoother but I was still stressed; I should have just let it go, let it pop, let it roll like the wheels that still carried us, onward, downward.

As I alluded to above we knew we couldn't go all the way to Oregon driving this way, once we got out of the mountains hills would be in short supply besides we were running low on funds and this RV with its starting problems and sixty mile an hour top speed was telling us to change our plans. I think I mentioned that one of the other reasons we had picked Ashland, Oregon was we heard there was lithium in the water and it made the people very friendly, so we headed to Hot Springs for besides being much closer and hillier it had a spring running through town that led to the spa where you could soak in the healing waters and a spot where you could fill jugs of this natural blessed stuff that was full of good minerals including a touch of, yes, Lithium. Out of our hands and into fates.

Aug 30th-Sept 4th, 2007

He said, "Why don't you come check my place out?" His name was Bill. That was the beginning of a new phase to our second trip; a twist of fate, something that will always be embedded in our memories and could mean whole no options and futures all the way to the end, maybe other lifetimes as well and again it was the Motor home that broke the ice that was the conversation 'peace' piece. "Great paint job", "We're right down the road, the historic log cabins", he said, it was very hot and we were at this barren site which we were ready to leave but not sure where, then this invitation and then going down the hill and seeing the sign and pulling in as if by some force (fairies?). The stars, the moon and the tides maybe, I mean it was not our usual destination, cabins with beds, a fridge and air conditioning. I (was) pulled in and all else followed.

It always starts the same; I want to know what you're feeling. I want to know if you are dealing with real feelings. I want to believe I can jump aboard a sinking ship, a blind alley, a naked hunch.

Bills historic log cabins were on top of a steep hill which we parked at the crest of, now this was more 'hill' then we needed but everything at Bills historic log cabins was more then we needed. Air conditioning -double beds and cable, I mean our RV had a generator, fold out beds and a gas stove so we were self-sufficient but it was in the nineties everyday so we decided to chill out. Yes, his name was Bill and he came over and talked after we settled in, we invited him to a barbecue on our deck, some kids asked about using the hot tub, he said "Don't pee in the hot tub", that was one of his mantras and there was a freshness to him, an openness which matched the air, the landscape and it was good and he told us of pixies in the trees and ghosts in the cabins and the next night he invited us to a barbecue, musical jam on the main deck and there was light, energy,

intense loneliness, wildly tame deer, tamed wild beings and it was new and you can't replace it, can't put a tag on it, a surreal reality.

At Bills historic log cabins we met people from around the world and were interested in their thoughts on our current government, most did not understand why we voted for Bush twice and thought we must be stupid or complicit, agreeing with his (our, the U.S.) policies.

They also seemed to know more of the real dirt since their medias not in the pockets of the aforementioned fear mongers but even knowing all they knew they couldn't conceive of our country not truly having free elections, what with Carl Rove and his shenanigans, to me that is one of the greatest crimes, not as bad as the human death toll of this war but of course one is a by-product of the other.

There was Pete and Sarah a couple from Spain and Denmark respectively. Then Cindy and Thomas from right down the road in Rapid City, we all spent a few nights together barbecuing and playing music. One night there was a very quiet gal and her quieter husband who (she) played a tune of hers in a beautiful aching southern voice and the big lady who looked like and sang like (though somewhat out of tune) a combination of Mama Cass and Mary Travers. We whipped up some Peter Paul and Mary for the occasion. She had a great laugh, there are so many laughs in the world, contagious-inspiring- sensual laughs; what a sound, *"If you smile at me I will understand cuz that is something everyone everywhere does in the same language"*, well, how about laughs, what a language that is, what a way to communicate, to warm the cockles of your heart.

Yes, there was laughter, music and sharing with strangers but are they really; are fellow spiritual entities truly strange to each other, when you're traveling you seem to transcend, crash thru the normal human roadblocks and become un-afraid, recognize old souls and on the (seemingly) final night there was this guy, pretty drunk, with a crazy laugh who said he's never going back and his wife said, "We're going back tomorrow morning, we'll be back to work on Monday, he's just...". Just what; like me I thought? I quit mine and I'm never going back to what was, to that same insane DAY TO DAY. He looked like he believed it, needed to believe he wasn't going back. He had that look in his eyes, oh; how they kill our spirits man, how they wear down our souls.

(I wrote this before I left)

"I became a part of the whole today, quit my occupation, stifling obligation"

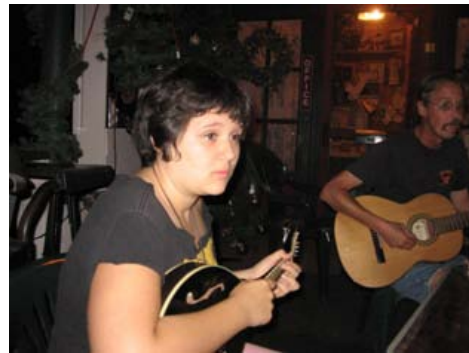
"On the edge of my very own holiday, wish it was more clear permanence or fear."

"Claimed myself the son of the sun today dancing 'neath her rays, melt my fears away."

"Spotlight on a middle-aged runaway, took his wife and children, story at eleven."

[COMING UP FOR LOVES PURE CLEAN AIR](#)

At these barbecues we were the main (small time) 'stars' since we had a few of our own songs and more experience singing and playing than most even though we hadn't played much in years. It felt good, reaching people, feeling like your connecting. I needed that feeling maybe that was part of my recent depression, not filling that need, no one to hear us, hear the songs, share the message and get that connection. I don't connect in many other ways, don't communicate well, I have not accomplished anything of value in my day to day, year by year, dead end dead soul jobs. Of course, I saw our greatest accomplishment right before my very eyes, laughing, talking and teaching right along with and beyond us adults. Our daughter Riva; preaching in gory detail about the mistreatment of animals as we barbecued our steak and chicken, jamming along on the mandolin she had gotten only two weeks before we left and leading the 'Me and Bobby McGee' choir in a young loud sure sober voice.



I wanted to write you a beautiful song, one that sets your mind sailing through a window, your heart to railing against all that's hateful, all that ties others down to life itself, all that conquerors for the sake of it and takes control for the power of it. They'll take it all, man, we got to step up, we got to get off the couches, we got to take it to them, we have to chip at the underpinnings, we have to let out a rebel scream, breathe in a hot desire, yell fire.

(Wrote this when we got back)

"I want to wake you I want to make you see that fear is not your reality. I want to live life, like it's a gift, like, fear is not our reality. Tell politicians, your position is fear is not your reality, we're not alone here, this is our home and fear is not our reality. When we open up our eyes our hearts we'll open up like cool September skies and when we finally realize we'll see the whole world standing 'neath forgiving skies with hands all raised on high".

When we were alone with Bill he spoke softly drunkenly, "People come, I get to know them, like them, then they leave and I don't hear from most of them again." They come as couples, paired off. He sees their commitment, their 'love'; twisted lopsided sacrificial addictive restrictive hurtful bound up in loss and pain love but 'love' none the less and he's left alone, again and again 'not quite' filled then left alone.

I wanted to tell him he's got something special, for one thing he's got a job many would kill for, in a place with a view to die for and even the supposed down side is something many would live for, to feel again and again, love for strangers and love in return, new, fresh, love without the need for power, traps, sexual control, just give out and take in; unconditional.

"Everybody's gone they snuck out the front door, single file without saying a word, their worlds unfolded so they moved on and now everybody's gone'."



FINAL CHAPTER

Hippy Funerals-Horse Visions-Renewed Faith

September 4th, 2007

There is a strange story about the spot where we parked by the health spa. There was a big parking lot there by a creek, it had deer wondering around and even had plug-ins. It was free but it was only for daytime use, no overnight parking. At one end was the spa, at the other end a funeral home (in the middle was a Masonic lodge) which had a drive way in the front of it like a half circle, slightly up and then slightly down at the other end. We decided this was the best place to park to pop the clutch to get going again. I was a little concerned about parking there because if there was a funeral I didn't want to offend anyone, I mean just having an RV there might be enough of a distraction/invasion but one all painted up like some late sixties flashbacking billboard was another thing. So I went over to talk to someone and ask their permission. This middle-aged guy wearing a black suit and warm smile was inside, I told him our story and just like 99% percent of the people we talked to in this town, he was very friendly, understanding and quite amused. So that became our spot to park when we came to town to get water (the magic mineral water with just a touch of lithium, like I said everyone was friendly and amused) or to soak in the mineral hot tubs at the spa which was only two dollars with your own towel.

One day when we went to park there we seen some people outside and realized there was a funeral service starting shortly. I parked and then went over to see if it was alright for us to be there, a woman was there and a man and they were all excited and went on and on about the fabulous RV and asked if we knew her Mom. I didn't quite know what she was going on about. She was saying to the guy "Wouldn't Mom just love this" and "It looks just like something she would have or want to have, its' perfect, she must have sent it". They told us it was their Moms funeral and she (her Mom) had been a life -long hippie and they took it as some kind of sign from above that the motor home was here. So (I asked idiotically), "Is it alright if we park her while we go in the spa"? Patty was getting a wrap of some kind done, (we had dropped her off at the door before we parked) so we would be there for a while; they were thrilled. I wanted to give my condolences but they were way too cheerful for that so we thanked them and they thanked us and we went to soak.



Just when we were coming out, the service was letting out, so we started up the RV (only slightly worried about the awful noise) and Patty and Riva took their places behind. I released the emergency brake, put it in second, the gals gave a little push and away we went to smiles all around.... and above. Never seen a happier funeral, now I wouldn't want to take all the credit, I mean they might have been drinking the water but I feel that we played a part. Again, I would have missed it all, they would have missed it all, none of it would have taken place, 'ka' would have been displaced, if we had not taken this trip, if I had kept my job. Think about what that means, all those memories, I mean I'm not telling everyone to do such a thing that would mean chaos, right? Right on! Write on.

So again this brings me 'round to what became the main reason for this trip; to share a smile, a tale, a laugh, a hug, a song or just a nod of understanding.

September 5th, 2007

The day after the long weekend, the day after the Holiday(s), the day after all the days of music, food and laughter, a moody bluesy Tuesday afternoon, 'back to reality' as they say. Not for us, surely, for we were on 'permanent vacation', we still had our multi-colored behemoth, our paisley parked prince, our formerly green shag carpeted eight tracked Mercedes with a cool cat case of the bends hung over the steepest hill headed

steady, ready to roll. Snared, beat, trapped, set. Yet, even for us and our Major Tom - Tom space tank it was ground control time. Time was. 'Earth to idiots, please come in'.

We had an appointment with reality in Rapid City to get our starter looked at, taken out, hopefully repaired and then put back in or have one ordered from who knows where. The latter was the way it happened and since we'd have to wait a day for it to arrive we decided to rent a car and go, guess where, that's right, back to the pixies, the pee-less hot tub and lonely Bill to try and make us all less lonely one last time. One more night, just the four of us (no tourists), and the pixies that I believe I may have seen. They may have been bugs of some kind attracted to the light but they had this strange way of moving diving speeding away disappearing like the lights some take as flying saucers. I was just glad to be living a life if just for a moment where things need not be explained.

The next morning we bid Bill another sad adieu and he signed our RV 'MISS YOU ALREADY WITH LIGHT AND LOVE BILL.' It was a perfect made to be billboard and we cursed ourselves for not having signatures of all who had passed laughed pulled towed and ticketed our way.

EVERYBODYS GONE



September 9th, 2007

Heading home; almost.

That should have been the end of the mechanical obstacles that kept us from moving forward (of course our experience moved forward none the less), I mean we weren't that far from home, we could get there in a couple days. We did camp one night and found a nice place by a lake with electrical. It was scary to turn the engine off, old habits like fallen starters die hard. The next morning after the dogs took their morning craps and us our showers we headed out without a hitch. But it doesn't end here because when you travel with yours truly, head idiot, creator of chaos, the fun never ends, the kicking myself in the ass never ends and what also never ends are the humiliating stories that everyone can laugh at, at the next friends or family get together. The beat goes on, off or not.

We ran out of gas, diesel that is, 150 miles from home on the freeway at night in the middle of nowhere, next diesel station about twelve miles up the road. Don't ask how, just another of those miss-firings of the brain, I swear when we first got the RV that I was

not able to stick the gas hose all the way in without gas coming out so I never did that again. When I put the nozzle in just a little ways it seemed to work fine but it would stop after about forty dollars, so that's all I ever put in at one time thinking that's all it takes. Another thing (excuse) is there are two tanks but one was more or less an overflow tank, anyway, that's the way I figured it since it was hard to fill up. When we ran out the needle was just on the edge of reserve where it had been, I swear, many times before, reserve meaning to me, I reserve the right to believe there is still enough gas in at least one of the tanks until I can find the cheapest diesel available, right? Wrong? When you run out of (diesel) gas you really run out of gas, I mean you don't really know what running out of gas is until you do it with a big diesel 1974 five speed motor-home, yes, indeed.

I've told you about how wonderful all the people we met on this trip were, the people of South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota, it was like there was some secret contest going on that we were not aware of, where the most generous state to 'strangers' would win a million dollars or maybe we were part of a new reality show called 'Help the idiots and win BIG'. I knew this and would have bragged about it before this last incident happened. Now I was being tested and I have to admit, sadly, that at the immediate time of the gas crisis I had forgotten all about the good-hearted people and became cynical, I lost faith. I couldn't admit I ran out of gas due to my own negligence and thought maybe it was something those pretending to be so... nice mechanics did, those guys who charged us so little to take that starter out and put back in, crawling around underneath and having to take the whole muffler system off, maybe they sabotaged it, yes, that's what they did to get back at us for being freaks for hating America and Bush or maybe they were in cahoots with some station down the way, you know, give them some business. How quickly we forget. How natural, our doubting natures. So maybe I needed an extra kick in the head/ass lesson on trusting my fellow human being. How sad.

Right then though there was no time to dwell or dawdle so I got the gas can and started walking.

Renewed faith

I got a ride right away. This guy stopped, drove me the ten miles to the diesel station gave me an extra gas can, drove me back, dropped me on the other side of the freeway so I could get there sooner and said he'd check on us on his way back after going down to the next exit to turn around but then we saw the cop car that was now behind our parked dead on the freeway vehicle, we never saw the guy again, very friendly but afraid of the law.

Speaking of the law, he turned out to be the nicest of all, just incredible, he drove me down to fill the two cans up again (like I said getting a diesel started is a bitch). Then when it still wouldn't go for naught he pushed us with his little squad car so that we were off the freeway, down to the bottom of the nearest ramp. He was quite young, twenty-something, he had lived in Minneapolis and liked it there, he had even shopped at the local healthy hippie co-op, The Wedge, where we shopped (at least we did, we may not

be able to afford it when we get back). Yes, an officer of the law who liked health food over chocolate covered donuts. He kept telling us he would check on us in the morning.

So we got ready to spend the night on the ramp, no heat, no hookups and very little food left. It was raining, a cool steady drizzle. I had been on the line with our phone line mechanic, the other Mark, and had been told different options of what to do and look for, none of which I understood completely (if at all) but the rain and dark put a damper on any crawling blindly down under anyway. Then all of a sudden our daughter says "What the heck is that, do you see that"? I look out the front window and see this large dark movement, animals of some kind, huge, strange....wait, horses, yes, I could just make out horses, about seven or eight of them with people on them with long raincoats like the long-riders riding right there in front of us, on this ramp out in the middle of nowhere in the freaking rain and fog, yes, just the right amount of fog to make it all the more surreal. They rode a little ways in our direction, off the beaten path though not to help us or have a Pow Wow for they were as speechless as we were, as silent as the horses themselves. They were drawn our way, they had also seen something huge and out of place, something strange and colorful, yes, I believe they headed are way or the horses headed them our way because they felt compelled, pulled, driven to take a look at the six legged un-moving splashed up Brady Bunch on acid beauty of a beast. I mean forget about ten horses and their dark riders out in the fog and the rain at two in the morning in the middle of nowhere right off the highway, our vehicle was weirder and the real sight to behold.

So this is where our other daughter Jamie, the one in her late twenties did get to be a part of our trip. We called her the next morning to come down, bring gas cans, drive us to get more gas and drive us home if we needed to abandon the thirsty quirky monster. We kept getting gas and pouring it in and I would try starting it, giving it a little more pedal each time though I was told that that shouldn't matter, finally, on what was going to be the last chance before calling for a tow (again) I gave in to my wife and girls insistence that if you think, it will be. If you treat the machine with solidarity and kindness it will behave in kind. I told myself this is it, I'm going to count to five (since that had been a lucky number in a dream) and then I'm going to push the button, give it a lot of pedal and it will start and ...I shall will it to start...and... so it did.



Patty drove back with Jamie having had enough of me and my special bond with motorized things and so it was just Riva and I; we cranked the music. We made it back home about six hours later (it only goes 60) and parked in front of the house for the night planning on finding a place to move it as soon as possible when we awoke. The next day a friend of Rivas stopped by and came in yelling "Their giving you a ticket."

Welcome to the city, to bureaucracy, to De ja vu, to my world, welcome home, again.

After-thoughts:

So looking back, what was the greatest lesson, the third eye mind opening surprise? That everyone was so kind, so generous with their time unlike those who now rule America and who'd have you believe that there is no empathy to match our great apathy. In the open west it's not that cut and dry. One stumbles round as the other carries on. They (our fear pushing leaders) just want us to believe that, they want us to give up or to fight amongst ourselves, to fear each other, our differences, which is what this whole war on terror is about; it is a farce, a distraction. But it is not Bush's cold dark fearful America out there. It's something different, something it's always been though slowly driven down, blocked out, muffled by the bought and paid for media, (liberal media, another spun-dry false creation) crushed beneath the hours of pointless toil, the struggle to pay the debts that have already been paid. You are the creditor, the creator of all the funds don't be afraid to take what's yours, don't be afraid to take a chance and doubt their power and don't be afraid to throw that bill away. Don't be afraid to unlearn what you've been conditioned to learn. Don't be afraid to learn anew. Don't be afraid to know who you are. We are only what we believe we are, that is the real secret whispered deep in the air between our heart and soul between our minds and our blind faith. And we are all in this fight together!

I final shout out to music.

On the road music had a dual purpose; it kept us sane from the noisy mechanical diesel drone and brought us together, embraced all generations. Our daughter loves a lot of the old sixties stuff and I love a lot of the new ,like they say 'good music is good music' but meaningful, sincere, soul shaking, blaring daring music can be as fulfilling as the blood that runs through our veins. It also brought us together as 'strangers' around the barbecue at Pixie Bills, songs we all knew that had a shared individual history. Even lonely Bill who defined loneliness as people coming and going instead of what was there in his own open broken sharing heart. The music made him smile, he knew like many of us do that the sounds within us, the waves that surround us, are where the answer lies. Sound waves, sound heart, sound mind.

We sang "Me and Bobby McGee" every night, did we ever get it right, maybe, maybe not, it had its magic moments, maybe the first time, maybe the last, a perfect song, maybe, maybe not, surely as close as you can get? Could I die happy having written it? Maybe, though writing great songs doesn't guarantee true happiness, again, the answer lies within. You can spend/waste your life asking/avoiding the questions. The writer (Kris Kristofferson) was acknowledged, the (most famous) singer (Janis Joplin) revered,

and those three perfect chords, used and abused. Those three chords were all we knew, had and needed to keep our weekend party going.

Three; see, that's what it all comes back to, the next time we travel we shall be three again; a new three, my wife, myself and the younger dog, when our daughter stays behind to finish school and the old dog travels on alone to doggy heaven.

I keep thinking of all I would have missed these last couple months if I would have kept working. I gave up the security, the stability and thankfully the monotony. I (we) couldn't have gone on these trips; I would not have had enough vacation time or the seniority to pick it at that time. God, we work so damn long and hard in this country and for what, so we can pay the interest on our homes, our cars, our loans, our medical bills and our lives. And how about that medical insurance that those lucky enough to get really only need because they eat the crap they give us to eat. The healthy foods are not promoted, advertised even one percent as much as the junk. Surprise, surprise, *the longer you live, the sicker you are, the richer they get, the higher the bar.*

Yes, I would have missed out on all the adventures we had, the people, mostly kind and helpful from around this country and the world. Like I said and I believe it needs repeating, our America looks and acts nothing like Bush and his henchmen. They don't resemble the majority in this country especially anyone who does a kind deed for the sake of it. The lady at the town meeting said, 'I work three jobs' and Bush said 'How uniquely American'. Mama Bush said that the people of New Orleans who stayed in the Metro-dome sleeping in their own shit and squalor after losing all they had, "Never had it so good." What more need be said?! These people are the worst of our country, it amazes me that they are in charge and saddens me that they represent us to the rest of the world; their coldness, their lack of empathy, their bigotry, their small-mindedness, their fear, their paranoia, their sinfulness.

I forgot to mention that just before we left my wife and daughter were at each others' throats and hearts, I guess it's typical and I don't quite understand and don't believe I'm meant to. It was at the point where one didn't even want to go with the other (and probably another reason the oldest daughter thought to stay behind) but we got things resolved through old fashioned communication of true feelings; crying, bitching and so on, and so when I mentioned at the beginning of the story about coming together in tight quarters some of you were probably shaking your head with due cause. I think the fact that Riva had a friend along (on the first trip anyway) and that there was so much non-stop machine made outside our hands drama going on, the inner circle human drama was kept to a minimum. Seeing, hearing her and her mother laugh, cook, sing and rag on me together, strong and united, made everything worthwhile.

If I'm begging on the streets tomorrow it'll be worth the laughs we had, the family laughter I could not have had, for my job had squashed my ability to laugh, killed it, made it too hard, not easy to do. That's it, too hard, not easy. So the 'memory' smiles and miles are worth it all and not knowing what's happening next is worth a lot. And the RV,

well, it's a hard one, a pain in the ass when you're driving in the city with the shifting and the rattling and the god awful noise but when I'm moving down the highway at that top speed of sixty looking out thru that big reflective piece of the world view window, riding so naturally high, I put on some tunes and turn it way up and the four way tinny speakers mix in with the engine and together they make a new sound, an ancient modern hum that's like my own sonic heaven.

I was never the consummate hippie; your tie-dye, patchouli wearing, tabouli eating, uninhibited, positive vibe hug giving, free -love child. I was 15 in '69' and I was taken captive by the music and the message. I believed money and the flag were symbols of greed and false nationalistic pride and I feel I've been proven right. I grew my hair long and didn't cut it in the mid-seventies when most others did. I wore bell bottoms for awhile and had a Monkees pull over buttons on the flap shirt and a Nehru jacket which now seems very wrong. But I lost my way like many others through alcohol, sexual attention seeking, ego and having to work to survive. Now by default or by my off springs total submersion in the best of what I've mentioned above I'm driving this Timothy Leary meets the Wizard of Oz motor home around.

Some would I say it all comes back to bite you in the end. I'd like to think that life is a circle. I'd like to think that when we open up our minds, we find our lives opening up to reflect/surpass our wildest dreams.

I'm a shy guy, fairly anti-social, don't dress flamboyantly but I know every time I drive this vehicle, everyone and I mean everyone is staring at us and most are smiling, thinking of another time. A simpler time though filled with another senseless war which we are very good at forgetting.

And the angels inside us shed a tear cuz they know that we'll forget this one too. Yes, we're standing on the edge of the world. Living, on the edge of the world and if we don't dig deep we'll crawl back, fall back asleep.

But behind this big wheel with the glass world view in front of me, I'm feeling at ease. I feel a smile coming on, I'm rolling. Not knowing, just rolling with it.



Until next time, when we go who knows where?

P.S. Our little old dog Scooter, who got busted with us, was put to sleep shortly after we got back. Our daughter will probably stay behind for school & may keep the other younger 'rainbow warrior' dog with her so Patty & I will truly be the 'married pranksters' except it won't be the same without the motor home. We parked it at Patty's brother's place up north so we would stop getting parking tickets. We were getting ready to move up that way ourselves which we have since done, anyway, a storm came through and the only tree that fell landed on the roof of the RV and poked large holes through the roof and pushed it in on one whole side. Unable to repair it ourselves and taking into consideration all the other things that didn't work we sold it to a gal who loved it as it was and promised she would not paint over the 'art work' as others had threatened.

We eventually got another, also a diesel, a class A, a foot shorter, eighteen years younger and unique looking but they'll never be another like the Mercedes. I stated earlier that I would talk about the soul of the engine that got us to where we needed to go. People have engines, some run great, some are broken down, people have drive, hopefully, but do engines have souls, you would think for me the answer would be a resounding no and before this vehicle that was true, I don't like machines and therefore they don't like me.

I should have been born in a previous century one without cars, computers and electric chainsaws but that motor home was a huge part of our trips and it affected the way people reacted to us and maybe the girls gave it a soul of sorts through the paintjob. It definitely had color and character which are human traits and it hurt to sell it, it was hard to let it go for it was a part of me and a part of a special time in my life but life rolls on, we roll on and writing helps. I'll keep writing and we'll keep traveling when/if we can, times are hard and going to get harder meanwhile take your own journeys of the mind, body & spirit. Speak out, get off the couch, quit eating all the crap they want you to eat, taking all the crap they give you to take & paying all their debts with their false money that you created.

Peace Health Happiness

Mark Patty Riva Jamie Yuffie (Hippie Dog) & Scooter (rest in peace).

The Idiots of Eden



The Idiots Of Eden – Leaving Babylon

By: Mark A. Garcia

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Download and Read Mark's other e-book.

[Totally Gone West.](#)

Mark experienced culture shock in his high school years when (after his parents divorce) he moved from the inner city to a small town suburb and there encountered many lily white- blue eyed -blonde haired hockey jocks and their cheerleaders. He eventually stumbled on to others of his own mind and from 1978 to 1982 with one in particular (Michael James Gray) took 'vacations' that became journeys and homes away from home. Along the way he discovered multiple ways of opening a beer bottle without an opener (this was before twist off caps), to roll with one hand and how to flirt without even knowing it. Oh, and as a side benefit he discovered friendship, freedom, life, love and all the subtle sounds within.



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