

# Inquiring Minds: A few reflections on the last 60 days

“All the heroes of tomorrow are the heretics of today.” --Yip Harburg Issue #23 May 2013

[Intent](#) [Past Issues: #1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7 #8 #9 #10 #11 #12 #13, #14 #15 #16 #17 #18 #19 #20 #21 #22](#) [Comment](#)

## GROUNDING BY HOME PROJECTS

I have not written this blog for two months, being busy with more pressing and practical matters: fixing our clothes dryer, clearing our vacation property, and installing a decorative gas burning stove and hearth. I love/hate doing these

things because I can, and they keep me more physically and mentally fit. I can usually do a better job

myself since I have the time, the ability, and the vested interest. The internet provides great do-it-yourself video instruction; but everything has to be double and sometimes triple checked.

Now to clear out parts of our over-grown yard... How to handle the water crisis is still a problem.

## GRASPING REALITY BY USEFUL PHRASEOLOGY

In her [interview with Bill Moyers](#), Karen Steingraber, introduced me to three interesting concepts. Having been arrested for blocking a fracking site and trespassing, this biologist, mom, and cancer survivor talked about **toxic trespass**, where our bodies and even breast milk are trespassed by the polluted air, water, and food around us. She also describes our reluctance to tackle these really big issues by a term coined during the barrage of news of the Viet Nam war. It is called **well-informed**



**futility** which is the tendency to disengage from a problem because it seems too large to deal with. She argues that our parents did not disengage during WWII, nor our ancestors over slavery which was so enmeshed into the economy of the country. (Though they wanted to.) Lastly, Ms. Steingraber calls for **heros** to lead us. She is one such hero, and although many of us do not have the mettle, expertise, and motivation of a Ms. Steingraber, she encourages us to do our part, however small, and maybe just keeping informed, as painful as that may be. As Karen sees it, real heros are needed and shall arise. The tendency is to let someone else do it, but each of us are mini-heros in our own way. We all have the potential to be a real hero if called.

## FORMER CLASSMATE IS A HERO TO MANY IN SO.CAL

In 2007, before Facebook existed, I created a web site to help me and others catch up with our 120 high school and college classmates. It has mini-bios of 30 of us so we can catch up on the last 50 years. Just recently I received two bios of



Dave is in back, and I am second from the left. We were Juniors at St. Joseph's Seminary then in Mountain View

classmates, and I am awed (again) at what they have done with their

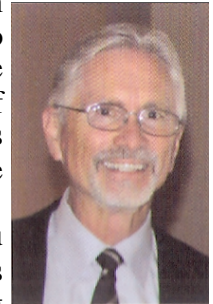
lives. One guy in particular, seems to be the male Mother Theresa of our class. His name is Dave Bishop (right).

I emailed you already about his taking in young women in distress (290 to date) and helping them get on their feet through his organization, [Pathways to Independence: Helping Abused Women](#), but now I want to tell you about the book written about him and his program. It's called [Butterfly Tears](#), and is written by two associates of Dave's. They wanted to chronicle some of the many (80%) success stories of the program he and several sponsors started 20 years ago.

I read the book and felt the pain and suffering so many women and children have endured, and I rejoiced with them at finding deliverance through Dave's program. Dave himself is, in my opinion, “**a wounded-healer**,” (a term used by the excellent author Henri Nouwen who wrote a book by that name in 1979). Here “one's own woundedness can serve as a source of strength and healing when counseling others.”

I also saw Dave's heroic effort as a attempt to help heal and preserve the sacred feminine in himself and all of us: those qualities of tenderness, compassion, and nurturing which are often brutalized by a less sensitive world.

When I told him about my little blog for family and friends, he said he would send me some books written about his organization.



Well he did, and I now have copies to give away to anyone interested or to young women you may know who might relate to the stories and success of other young women in desperate straits. These books are yours for the asking.

## THANKS GIVEN TO MY PHYSICAL HEALERS

### My Chiropractic Testimonial for those who may benefit

(submitted to [Athens Chiropractic](#), in San Carlos, CA, on April 25, 2013)

Five days away from major back surgery last April I postponed the operation to begin chiropractic care and was immediately taken off all medications and made drastic improvement in pain and mobility within the month.

Previously I had spent 8 months disabled by spondylolisthesis (lower back slipped discs) and sciatica. I had taken every treatment and medication Kaiser had to offer: medication, physical therapy, steroid injections, and acupuncture. Nothing worked, my muscles were atrophying, the medications were causing side effects, and I could barely walk. Sometimes the pain was so excruciating I would pass out. I was ready to give into the last resort, "the surgical option."

The side effects from some of the drugs made other things worse, and I feared that my "fatty liver" (cholestasis) would be permanently damaged or scarred (cirrhosis) by being over-taxed in filtering all the medications going through my system. Normal bowel movements were non-existent. Everything was a struggle. My orthopedic doctor said chiropractic was not recommended.

Finally, I was desperate, ready to have a surgery where they would cut me from the front much like a C-section, move the organs aside, insert a wedge between the

offending discs, sew me up, and then open up my back and insert a plate with screws to be anchored to my vertebrae in a foundation of synthetic cement which would hold everything in place and effectively fuse the discs in a foundation-like mass. The success rate for someone my age and health was 90%. The recovery period was said to be 18 months--a year and a half. There were all sorts of things which could go wrong, and the fused section would transfer more stress on the healthy spine now shortened by the process.

As I approached the surgery date, which was scheduled at the Kaiser in San Jose, I was looking for reasons to postpone what seemed like the inescapable alternative. Then the tide started to turn. On a Kaiser website, I saw the word *chiropractic* mentioned. The Kaiser-sponsored acupuncturist mentioned Feldenkrais, a type of exercise, and advised against surgery. But he wasn't a doctor. When I emailed my surgeon and asked him what he would recommend *if I were his father*, he said, "Try everything conservative first before surgery." The straw that broke (in this case saved) my back, was when I received an email from a friend, Dick Bagley, who had gone through the very same program I had at Kaiser. He also was recommended for surgery, but sees a chiropractor instead, and he plays golf three times a week!

At this point I hadn't even considered chiropractic because I assumed that a broken back was a skeletal matter and could not be treated. My doctors affirmed this misconception. Nick Athens was not only one of the best chiropractors in the area, who has treated the 49ers and the Giants for years, but he is also married to my cousin Candi. When I sent him my x-rays and MRI's, he said he

often deals with "spondy backs much worse than mine." One being that of a weightlifter who's now lifting 400 pounds again. Nick got me off all meds immediately, using ice for pain, and stretching, exercise, and adjustments for realignment with very quick positive results. He said he only wished I would have seen him right away. I do too.

I felt improvement immediately, so much so that I thought I could help a friend move an empty wheel barrow up a ramp--not a good move. I had a relapse. This time more instruction was given to pay attention to better body mechanics. It did take me several months to get my weakened legs back. Now I play or practice golf or tennis daily, ride a bike for more conditioning, and do a set of simple 15 minute back and core exercises three times a day, every day. I am also more aware of better body mechanics, was fitted for foot orthotics to balance my gait, and I drink water often. I do light upper body work in a gym 15 minutes three times a week. I have the strongest core I've ever had, and am in very good shape. My cholesterol, sugars, and other vitals are better than before my injury. And all without surgery. Thanks to Dr. Nick, Dr. Mario (Gutierrez), and to my friends and family for their support. Though the injury might still be there, it is contained within a natural wall of muscle, and I'm so grateful to be healthy, active, and aware of my limitations and my plan to stay healthy.

## THANKS GIVEN TO MY SPIRITUAL HEALERS

To all the friends and family who wished me well, and those who offered their prayers in private, I am so grateful. Perhaps I can become a wounded-healer myself.

--Hope you are well. Joe