



A Perpetual Itch

Number 20, Winter 2004/2005
Published for NAPA and UAPAA by Hugh Singleton
At 6003 Melbourne Ave., Orlando, FL 32835

RANDOM THOUGHTS

ANOTHER YEAR has slipped away to wherever history is stored, and I am not inspired to celebrate or to recognize the event in any way. Not so many years ago, I'll admit to having joined the herd in welcoming a new year with revelry, but I am beginning to forget whether I enjoyed doing that. Indeed, it seems now that peace and quiet is the best way to begin a new year.

When I compare the events of my childhood with those of my grandchildren, I am astounded by how much has changed. And not all of it is for the better, I am sorry to say. Progress achieved in the field of medicine is incredible; the number of lives that will be saved by today's technology is proof that unless we are destroyed by fanatics who employ weapons of mass destruction, we may achieve unbelievable life spans. The question remains, however, whether we will really want to continue living in a world that is being slowly but surely destroyed by our mis-use of it's resources. Such doubts, if they take root in the minds of our leaders, may spur development of our space technology. Perhaps when my grandchildren become grandparents, it will be possible to travel to or even live on other planets.

Differences in education are likewise awesome. The grandchildren I mentioned were learning things in kindergarten that I was not taught until second or third grade. In my early school years, I hardly knew what an adding machine was; now kids learn to use computers even before they reach pre-school age. It may soon be that elementary education is completed in only seven years and doctorates earned before the age of twenty-one. How will that stampede of knowledge be reconciled with the immature age of the students?

The world's population has grown rapidly despite a series of wars. World peace seems always out of reach no matter what efforts are made, and there is reason to question whether it will ever be achieved. There

may be a way for differing cultures to co-exist and it remains for us to continue an active search for it. To despair is to condemn future generations to the same kind of violence that past generations have endured. It is inexcusable for the world's inhabitants to remain tragically at odds with each other when the intelligence and means to reconcile differences exist.

There have been major shifts in the distribution of a number of cultures since my childhood. In various places in the United States, former minority groups are now in the majority. Changes in immigration laws have allowed for much of this. Farm machines now do most of the work previously done by laborers. Are we advancing to a point where machines will replace all human laborers?

My personal feeling is that while huge improvement in technology has undoubtedly benefited mankind, we have begun to lose many of those values that the older generations enjoyed. I am talking about such old values as truth, honor, charity, loyalty, decency, civility and respect. The loss I speak of is glaringly apparent in today's literature, theater, music, and in our everyday contact with the people around us. Film makers are producing movies which are horrible examples of behavioral standards for our youngsters to view. As a result our language is more in the gutter than out of it, and violence is so commonly displayed as to make it seem normal behavior. I cannot doubt that tragic events will occur repeatedly before people everywhere regain the sanity that once was common.

When I contemplate such things, it becomes clear to me why I do not feel like celebrating. I'm glad to know that the future is in younger hands ... the needed energy and enthusiasm resides with those who have yet to realize just what monumental effort is called for if our occupation of this lovely planet is to continue.

Godspeed, young people!



I am indebted to my good friend, J. Hill Hamon for the two photos seen on this page. His expertise with a camera is apparent. Both photos were taken on J. Hill's property "in the wilds of Kentucky", as he often describes it. I can testify to the beauty of his home and also to the warmth and good fellowship that is rampant there on Evergreen Road

--Hugh Singleton