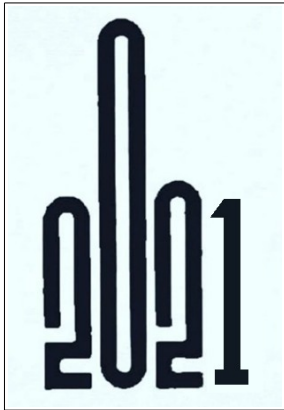


MMXXI Winter Solstice Letter from ajo at *The Cat Drag'd Inn*



So much akin to last year that many of the words can be reused, just as with reruns on PBS. The New Normal is Old News.

One's usual Childhood is a progression of discoveries: new words, wider horizons, expansive abilities. Now I am discovering the regression of some of those events: selective amnesia, atrophied abilities, tunnel vision... In Febter I got my first Covid-19 vaccine—talk about drive-by-shootings—and built a leaded glass window for Paul's new house.

Second Covid shot, Mar10 Day, Pi Day, Spring Equinox in quick succession. Renewing my AridZona Driver License the clerk suggested my my hair colour should be changed from red to white and a few pounds added to my weight.

The Cat Drag'd Inn is now registered as a Geocache Travel Bug. For those of you who play that game, when you sight the cache ID on the rear window log your catch! First To Find has been taken but there is still time for Second To Find. And given the constraints on travel these days a Virtual Sighting would not be out of the ordinary.



In a cooperative cause and effect lesson I submitted to mutual training with Hurricane Hazel-Rah. She earns a morsel or a dollop when she comes inside at my call. Or when I come inside at her call. Now she has escalated that relationship to wring more treats out of the larder; from time to time she will exit via her cat door only to return moments later and announce her presence. Once treated she repeats the excursion once or twice just to be sure.

If one were to walk 15 miles a day, every day, a circumwalkbulation at the equator would take 1660 days. That's four and a half years of walking and several pairs of boots. But of course there are oceans of water that get in the way. Taking one's time to stagger from country by plane or ship or train, visiting friends, waiting on airport queues and customs, working between times to earn money, getting all the way around could easily take 80 years especially if you had to wait to get started until you were old enough to travel on your own. There are 29 clocks in *The Cat Drag'd Inn's* length of 36 feet.



The fridge compressor runs about 60% of the time. More in the Summer, less in the Winter, by a factor of about 2:1. I've sold two storeys to the Escapees Magazine. Lube-Oil-Filters-Grease and replace front wheel bearings. Add professional writer to my resumé just below shade tree mechanic.

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A recent BBC News squib discusses how studying changes in the driving habits of over-65s could reveal the dementia: "...those with preclinical Alzheimer's tended to drive more slowly, make abrupt changes, travel less at night, and logged fewer miles overall, for example. They also visited a smaller variety of destinations when driving, sticking to slightly more confined routes." I resemble that...

July! After a year and a half finally get on the road to Pie Town. Got as far as Tucson and turned around in the rain. Fridge failure, leak in the roof, engine instrument problems. All that sorted out eventually and we are on the road for a third try. Only a month in Pie Town instead of a season. And just in the nick of time the furnace failed, my lady friend Nancy died, cousin Scotty died, and *The Cat Drag'd Inn* made a cameo appearance on YouTube in *Economic Outlook Quartzsite AZ*.



Next Stop: Winter! On the last leg of our return from Pie Town the shut-off of the secondary propane commenced to leak and the bus main radiator sprung a leak. Drip-drip-drip... at about \$0.02 (two cents) per drip and the cooling system holds at least nine gallons. So we have to get that repaired right quick.



Back in time for Polling Place Worker Training; one of the subjects covered was when and how to wear a mask. Now I am fully qualified to tell voters where they can stick their ballots.

After a few weeks of expense and grumbles over radiator repairs I now find a very serious oil leak in the bus's motor. Most likely the rear main seal is the culprit; not an easy thing to repair.

Paul's new little capannoné is coming along. He is sleeping there now and the galley is mostly functional tho not finished. I've been doing most of the wiring, between food bank days and post office days and doctor visit days.

Jack and Nancy of Winnipeg will not be here this Winter. Having being barred from travel, things being as they are these days, they are stuck in the cold dark north for another Winter in their Residence Vehicle. At least this time they have found a reasonable place to park: in the heated service bay of a local garage with a view of grease monkeys.

At Risk of Intemperance: November 11th, Veteran's Day and Doctor Day. Annual physical at my HMO PCP, more on that later. On the road to and fro much of the chatter on the radio concerns Thanking Vets for Their Service. As with "Christmas Music" before we even get the turkey thawed, the maudlin thanks is tiring after the first two or three. Let me write this about that.

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Veteran's Day—At Risk of Intemperance. The war mongers are out in force today. All the talk is how thankful “we” are for their service. Some folks were going on about three generations of their family serving, or, “my father was... and I worked for the VA...” Does that count any more than the trash collectors or the school bus drivers? I was tempted to climb on the band wagon and tell how my father built the destroyers and my three brothers and one sister were in the army...and I helped build the satellite communications networks you used to call home from the front. I also made the anti-war posters for the kids to put up in their high school.

There is no question in my mind that the veterans who were conscripted deserve to be thanked, and those who served in World War II, the last “war” that was a war, but beyond that? No! And especially not those who enlisted. “...burn women – kids villages...I wanna kill...”. They need no thanks. The truckers and the school teachers need thanks, not enlistees.

Enlistees need forgiveness for they knew not what they did, what they were getting into.

My Annual Medical Checkup was OK; I'm good for watching another year of political procrastinators and global gadabouts--present company excepted of course.

I'm having a hard time finding much good news to write about. Getting old ain't for sissies but at the same time one must not regret growing older; it is a privilege denied to many.

My uncle Sir Issac said: I was thinking about gravity the other day; without it all you have is gravy.

The rest of my 2021 storey and lots more pictures is in Road Letters 21a, 21b, 21c, and eventually 21d, all to be found at <http://thecatdragdinn.org/migo.htm>

I say eventually cos I am thinking of joining the French Foreign Legion or perhaps the rest of the population in Covid Induced Depression. In the DSM CID has been added to the chapter on SAD. Of late I've been living in the past glory of old movies and well-worn books. If you want me I'll be hiding in my blanket tent with some Oreos and my colouring book.

And the moral of the storey is... Happy Merry Quiet Healthy... Take a break and go to work?

*To my Buddhist friends, Namaste;
To my Jewish friends, Happy Hanukkah;
To my Christian friends, Merry Christmas;
To my Druid friends, Happy Winter Solstice;
And to my Atheist friends, Good Luck.
Where does that leave my Agnostic friends?*

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