

NewsBetter 4 Volume 2006

RAMBLINGS

from the mind of Matthew Walz

It's always the same thing....I sit here staring at the screen, wondering what will be the topic of Ramblings. I always expect something to hit me like a rock, and I'll say "Ouch!" and then a topic will be in my head. I sit here also wanting inspiration for a poem. With music blaring, I intently listen to the lyrics, maybe inspiration is there. I read old NewsBettters.....what did I write about in the past? As I listen to a couple Weird Al songs, and I prepare to go to the Costa Rican jungle, an Idea forms for a topic, summed up by two letters. TV. In "Fight Club," they shun "modern life," especially TV. As Tyler says, "Is it (referring to things of life, not TV specifically) essential to our survival in the hunter/gatherer sense of the word? No. What are we then? Consumers. We are the byproducts of a lifestyle obsession." Wow.

The idea of throwing out the TV first crossed my mind in 1997 when I read "Stranger in a Strange Land." He referred to TV as a goddam babble box. I tried to read the book skipping over goddam, but then realized, if I say it as God Damned, as in God has damned the babble box, it took on a different view. Being raised in the church, I was taught not to say things like "by God," "thank God," or the like, as it was blasphemy. Without rambling on too much, it has taken me some time to realize something like "I survived the wreck by God!" was NOT blasphemy. In the other sense, I believe it is not blasphemy to be able to state that something has been damned by God. And I truly feel that TV is such an item. Anyways, all this wrestling with blasphemy while reading the book has taken me a long journey.

However, throwing away my TV keeps popping up. In 1998, when I moved into my apartment, my TV would go green from time to time, so I wouldn't watch it when it did that. I only got CBS and PBS to begin with, so shutting it off was not that big of a deal. Soon, I was almost never turning it on. A year later, I moved. This time I had cable! But we decided that we didn't want the extra bill, so it was dropped. Soon, we never turned on the TV, and not long after bought a pool table. We set it up in the living room. We'd invite people passing on the street to play a game. We met a LOT of people that way. I forgot about TV.

Then I started dating a gal who had cable. Once again, I found myself in front of the TV. I've been pretty much addicted to it until about 18 months ago. Through events in my life, I shut off the TV. It had become a babble box. I have barely turned on the TV since. Right now, my TV is fed only by rabbit ears, and the signal goes away when the fridge kicks on. I rather like it this way. Why sit in front of the TV being fed commercial after commercial? UGH! "They" are turning me into a byproduct of a lifestyle obsession. To wax conspiracy, TV's are a most useful tool in crowd control. A dumb society will simply follow what it is told. "We," as a society, learn a large amount about current events through the TV. How can we argue with something when it is our only source of knowledge? Looking at "the big picture," TV's scare me. I believe it is a useful tool, but like any great tool, it can be used wrong. I'm trying to NOT get too radical here, but just throwing out some food for thought.

So, in conclusion, why not shut off the TV the next time you surf all 900 channels and can't find anything worth watching? Maybe there's weeds that need to be pulled in the garden. A snowy walk that needs shoveling. A book to be read and digested. Or, the best option, a sun set that needs to be watched. Oh, man, I just missed CSI....

Clarification and guidance

It seems quite a few people have not understood exactly what was going on in the story "My Existence." So, I thought I'd offer some insight. There are two people's point of view in the story. Bell's and "I." It was my intention that the reader be "I" The story starts with some tragic event, and the reader is knocked out. The reader is then taken to some place like a prison. Then we switch to Bell's story, and she wakes up after being shot. We follow her as she makes a painful journey to find help. I keep switching back and forth, and it seems I did not leave enough clues that one person is you, and the other is Bell. Maybe I'll have to add a few lines in the first paragraph. Live and learn...or maybe write and learn. Check my web page "http://www.geocities.com/matthew_walz2000" because I have My Existence posted there, I have the beginning "fixed." Of course, my dog has never been the same since I got him fixed....

Cure Rant Eve Vents and noose....and stuff....

So. Um. So? The biggest news from the desk of me is I went to Costa Rica! What an awesome experience! If you have an hour to spare, just ask me "how was Costa Rica?" Summary- We drove all day into the jungle, the road ended, then we hiked four (4) hours into the jungle. We lived with the indians for a week, and helped them build a "community center" of sorts. A place for church goers to spend the night because they hike for hours to get there. In two words.....Life changing.

TRENT!! He's somewhere.... Singapore? Just remember, no chewing gum, or painting graffiti! And the toilets are called "squatties" for a reason.

Got noose from Lynn Richer. (Name changed to protect his identity) He reported dying 3 months ago due to boredom. He is currently awaiting resurrection. Thanks for the Report!

And from Audra Acheson Miller, I got this report. Terry is driving the activity bus thing for the Attica Public School. He works on the farm and for the Harper County FSA office as a field man. And, he received a BBQ grill for his birthday. Audra adds, gee....my jobs are boring, but flexible, and good.

What else? I'm sure there's news, but as usual, very few people give me news to go in zee newsbetter. I have lots I can talk about, but what am I allowed to print for the world to read? send me news! Whether it be your garden produced 10 tomatoes, or you have new tires on your car. Or, you built a new house.

Technical Specifications Department

A new column. It's Lynn's fault, really. He did a surprise inspection of my business, and found I had difficulty with pipe. Here is his findings and advice.

- 1 All pipe is to be hollow throughout the entire length. Do NOT use holes of different length than the pipe.
- 2 The Inside Diameter of ALL pipe must NOT exceed their Outside Diameter -- otherwise the hole will be on the outside.
- 3 When ordering 90 or 30 degree elbows, specify left-hand or right-hand, otherwise you will end up going the wrong way.
- 4 Joints in pipes for water must be watertight. Pipes for compressed air, however, need only be airtight.
- 5 Pipe over 2 miles (3.2km) in length must also have the words "LONG PIPE" painted in the middle so one will not have to walk the entire length of the pipe to determine whether it is a long or short pipe.

Poe It Tree and Kinda Rhymes.

This Poem is about my step Grandpa, and the exciting day. We were getting to the end of the memorial service, when we were told a tornado was heading our way. We took shelter within the funeral home, and the tornado missed us.

Dancing Proud and Tall.

As these things are.
 I try to stay afar.
 Just like a hundred memorials
 heard somewhere before.
 Enter, listen, stay sad, head for the door.
 Words come and go.....
 But not today,
 for amidst it all,
 I saw a tornado,
 handsome, and tall.
 Peering out the window,
 I got a peek,
 Of a whirlwind, graceful and sweet.
 Dancing across the prairie,
 Swaying to his own beat.
 I could not help but admire,
 for he affected so many.
 Although it seemed he'd never stop,
 he'd make sure to slow down,
 brakes red hot, and a bald tire,
 Just to earnestly inquire,
 How are you, Doll?
 I smiled as he danced by...
 ...one last time.
 Yes, I saw a tornado,
 as it ascended to Heaven,
 dancing, proud and tall.
 We miss you, John Paul.

Store E thyme.

WALTER! He would be the inspiration for the story. He asked me the question, I wrote. It's Walter's fault this story exists. Oh, the conversations we've had!

Snow Flakes

It was a point of conversation some months ago, I recalled. And now, I was thinking it all over again- When does adversity kill? When does tribulation become demise? I began to think back and reflect the events. Where was the starting point, the down hill slide?

"I just need twenty bucks!" I exclaimed.

"Dude! Calm down, let's see what can be done..." the fellow behind the desk replied.

I was here asking for just \$20. The fellow seemed to lack empathy. But this was only the beginning of today. We need to rewind farther.

"I think it's over." She said staring at the wall, not even looking at me. With that she stood up, and went into the bedroom. I could hear her rifling through clothes in the closet. Guess she was off to her sister's. Oh well. I didn't like her perfume anyways....

But that still is not the beginning. Where does the chain of events start? Maybe birth, I tried to joke to myself. The flat tire that made me late and caused my wife's and I first fight? Then one could argue, buying that pickup. A snow flake is pretty, but an avalanche kills.

So, the first fight, the separation, the loss of sleep, falling behind on house rent, the boss getting on me for my work attitude, and the firing. Now I was trying to find \$20 to finish filling my gas tank so I could drive out of this city.

"Okay, I'll be nice and give you \$15" He finally said, looking up from his magnifying glass.

"WHAT!" I yelled. With that, he stood up, and produced a baseball bat. I tried to get out of the chair, but wasn't fast enough. I put my arm up to block, but only heard bones breaking.

"OUT!" He yelled. I got out of the shop as fast as possible. Only to realize as I slid into the driver's seat, the seriousness of my injury as I tried to run the manual transmission. Steering would not be possible when I shifted, with a broken left arm.

I Pulled onto the street, other cars slammed on their brakes as I ground the gears and used both lanes to drive. Eventually, I managed to get onto interstate and set the cruise. Thinking it all through and paying no attention to my driving, or the other's. Even adjusting the heater was quite a chore, I realized as the snow began to fall.

Eventually, the hustle and bustle of the city traffic disappeared. Just me and few big rigs trying to peer through the flakes. Quite a peaceful snowfall, actually. My exit approached, and I thought I did quite well at coming to a halt. Then back through the gears as I began up the snow covered dirt road, the wind began to increase, too. So did my thoughts of sorting the events leading to my exodus. I suppose my wife and I got too big of a house, then I thought, that means getting married was at fault, too. The plumbing needing constant repair, and of course, the water ruined a wall. Me not getting the yard mowed often enough. But maybe it started long before my marriage. Not getting a job in the field of my degree means college was for not. That money would definitely fill my gas tank. Maybe all this adversity was my own doing. Maybe it was not fate.....maybe it is.

Somewhere in a thought, I heard the engine stutter. Then it went quiet. I pulled the shifter to neutral, but the snow did not allow for much of a coast. A few feet didn't matter, anyways. I grabbed the blanket I had stored behind the seat, did my best at wrapping myself up, and took off into the night, truck lights still on. And that is how I ended up here, laying somewhere in the middle of a wheat field, snow falling on my face, and going into shock. And still searching for the beginning of the end. Don't all stories have a beginning? It had to be after high school, right? Or maybe I wasn't taught enough in high school? Maybe I didn't learn. Maybe I should have called a friend. Or even gone to visit.

Still, the resounding question....When does adversity kill instead of make you stronger? What was the one decision that actually lead me here? What was that first snow flake that became an avalanche? When did it all go wrong? Or was it ever right? Or.... maybe this is right.....it sure feels warm. And I'm finally beginning to feel happy.

THE END

And that's it....The NewsBetter ends again. It's a labor of love for me. I hope you love my labor. If you want to contact me, especially just to say HEY! you can call *****. Or e-mail me at ***** , or snail it to *****. ALL suggestions, or articles you've written and you would like me to include, any news, ANYTHING, feel free to send. Don't forget to drop by my web page at www.geocities.com/matthew_walz2000 By the way, this is Copyrighted 2006 by Matthew Walz, so HA.