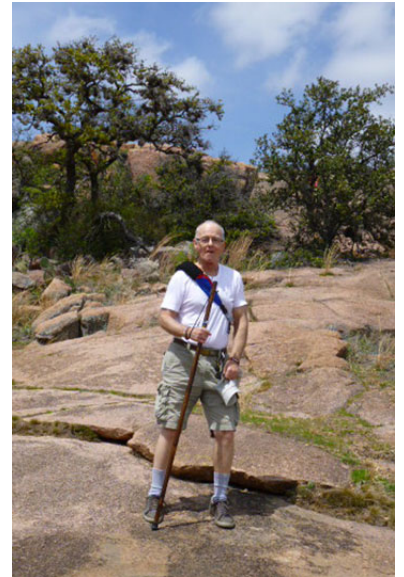
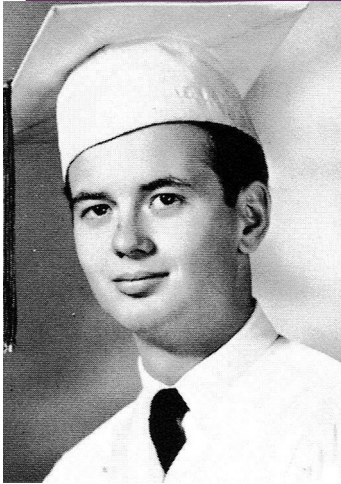


BIOGRAPHY

Steve Stoker



Hi all!

..the good, the bad and the ugly. Remember those movies? I'll try for a balanced bio, a little good, a little bad. But I hope not too much ugly.

Some info by the numbers.....

1. After grad, went to UTEP for a semester, got a flock of D's, knew I wasn't ready. Looked into the army. I qualified for the Army Security Agency (electronic intelligence), joined for 4 years. Spent a year in school at Ft. Devens Ma. I was also in an honor guard while there. Assigned to Korea for a year. Spent a year on an island in the Yellow Sea, just off North Korea. From there, went to Germany for about 2 years. Lived with about 12 other g.i.s in a house on the economy in Bad Aibling at the foot of the Alps. Great, great, duty. We were in a 2 story house, had a maid and a cook. Zero complaints about the time in the army. I almost went into special forces, but a captain of the school who interviewed me told me to get out when my time was up and go back to school. I think he was a little bitter.
2. Parents had moved to San Antonio while I was in the army so I came here. Spent a year working at a musical wholesale company then went back to school. I graduated from Trinity U with a degree in sociology and anthropology.
3. Worked for the Red Cross for a year, then a short stint at a dental tool company (while I was looking for another job) and then went to work for Children's Protective Services. Ug. Spent 4 years there, which was 2 years too long, and then got a job with the Texas Atty General. I was an investigator, worked in child support. I retired from there after 29 years or so.
4. Marriage....I married at 28 just before I went to work for CPS. Was married 10 years. She was bipolar and within 5 years I knew I wanted out. She would not seek treatment. No kids. I finally separated from her and she promptly disappeared. I was close to her mother and grandmother, kept in touch with them. After about 9 months, I got a call from the Boerne, Tx sheriff. Her body had been discovered in a dry gulch. Had been murdered for a computer. The men responsible went to trial and were sentenced on that and other charges.
5. I've lived with my partner for 20 + years. We get along well, like each other, never saw a reason to "marry". We hike often, when it's cool (!) and in the summer go on short hikes early on weekends. Movies, tv, reading. She still works.



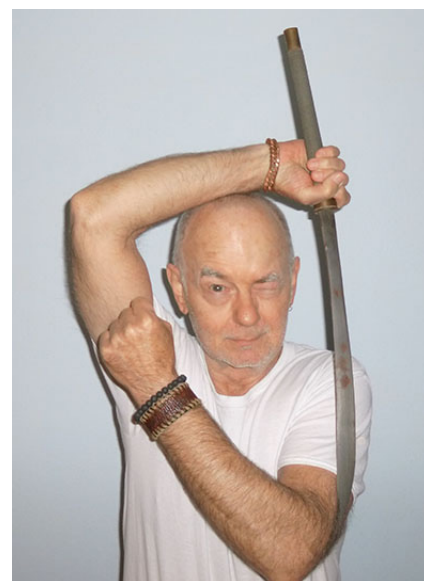
Michele

6. I have had many, many hobbies/interests. Musical instruments, birding, writing, fencing, spent a few years with a Jungian analyst-in-training, who is also a friend. My “analysis” was not for anything specific, just a great, life-long interest in philosophy/psychology/religion. I’ve studied Jung extensively, interest in the relationship of the conscious/unconscious, our shadow “dark sides” and how to integrate those...
...spent 10 years of deep involvement in Tibetan Buddhism until that finally opened out into depth psychology...

Retirement, like every other stage in life, has been a mixed bag, good/bad, if we think in those terms. I volunteer 3 or 4 days a week at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, have friends there and I like being outside. I’ve pared down the interest in birding to just one bird: vultures. Fascinating birds, once you get past the myths about them. I do yoga/joint mobility exercises every day, go to two yoga classes a week, use a strength program called AthleanX as well as practicing martial arts. My waist line was 29” in 1963 and now it’s 32”. I had a natural inclination toward physical fitness for as long as I can remember. I just like the challenges. I’ve recently incorporated a suspension system, TRX, into my workouts. A piece of advice to anyone who wants to exercise but has trouble staying with it: variety, variety, variety. Lift weights, use resistance bands, do calisthenics, learn some martial arts forms, use medicine balls.

Get a variety of programs going, work muscles from different angles. Ha! Nobody asked for my advice but I gave it anyway! (I don’t often do that anymore. Bad habit. But I slipped up here!)

I go to a Quaker meeting every other week. I like it because it’s “loose”, no big requirements to sign on a dotted line or believe in lots of doctrine and dogma....mainly go for the people there. A really liberal group. Consider myself to be socially liberal and fiscally conservative!
It is sometimes a challenge to know what I want to do with “free time” but this comes and goes!



Some things I've learned from study as well as thought/logic/reasoning/intuition:

Not all problems need to be solved.

Much of what I've thought of as "problem" is not that at all. It's just how things are.

The less I identify with social roles, the better. I'm not the role I play, never have been, never will be.

Roles are roles, faces, masks, and doings that I put on. Don't get attached to the role because it's not mine.

It exists as part of social life. I never, ever created any role I was in. It was there before me and others had a hand in assigning me that role. So don't identify with it. It's not forever, nor even for long!

Stay with feelings. If I feel a little depressed, down, well, hey, who ever said I was supposed to be happy, up, vigorous all the time??? Same is true for the good times, feeling good, up, lots of interaction and contact with others. All of that disappears for a time and then can return. Or not. Welcome the feelings as I would a guest. After all they're as much a part of "me" as anything else in my life--including most of you to one degree or another all those years ago.

I'm NOT the master of my fate/destiny/future. Was good to feel that way as a young person, gave me oomph, impetus, energy, interest to conquer the world (so to speak). But looking back I see again that nothing I did was separate from the common, human association. Master of my fate? Well, no. There's a middle ground here where I can have direction, will, determination, discipline for something, but I can never be totally responsible for outcome. I win some, I lose some. That's the way it is.

We may all be in the same boat, but we're all on different journeys. My journey does not compare to yours, nor yours to mine. No best, better or worse, no positive, nor negative, just beings journeying in the universe to we know where. Is that not wonderful?

Carnival

Something
pulls me from
the center

toward the edge and
I must dance again.

I fight.

I'd like this boundary
to be clean,
brick-wall neat,
deep-water clear.

It isn't.

Between us is a gap,
and magic
smiles
upon the space
where spells are cast,
nodes of otherness
appear.

I stay me,
you stay you
and magnetic laws
hold court as
we dance this endless
proximate piece,
performing art
without artifice,
unconscious, maybe,
of the stage we're on.

Steady-state isn't liked here,
inertia is anomaly
tolerated not at
all by the

gods assigned to
move us along
with this carnival
to towns
I do not
know

as we pirouette and
shuffle
ball chain,
now close
now far,
dancing

our way
toward endless night.

I dance
till the center claims me for
a time
yet something knows
I must dance again.

I hope y'all have a wonderful time at the reunion. I'd told Johnny why I won't be there.