



The Taylor Times



The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"

Email: myoozik@aol.com

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IT FOLLOWED ME HOME! CAN I KEEP IT?

For many years the urge had been welling to stretch my musical circle back to the rotund corral of my youth. The child of my musical heritage had gestated as a piano, was born into the world as a trumpet, and grew into the shape of a tuba. Who would have guessed? The trumpet was and still is in my care, but the tubas in my life were always foster children. It was the instrument I shunned at first when orthodonture required the transition, but later grew to love as I became immersed in the rich sonorities that the Baby Huey of the band and orchestra quacked prominently in my ears. But the cost of adopting one was always beyond my means... that is, until Christmas, 2000.

A friend of the folks' in Florida, church chorist and local tuba player, had an instrument to spare... a Yamaha 3/4 size, 3-valve, BBb, including case... at a price I couldn't refuse. At the very least it would afford me the opportunity to sample my intestinal if not diaphragmatic



fortitude. The trick... getting it home.

With suitcase, golf clubs, and carry-on, one large tuba, hold the fries, required some thought. Ship it back? It would take a week at a cost of

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Where were you on February 28?

For about three seconds a vibration grew in the office, like a large truck driving by the building. Across the street at Sea-Tac Airport it's not unusual for airlines to test their engines in the maintenance facility with word-stifling vibrations, but that noise is obvious. Sometimes the heavy foot of an office worker pounds through the corridor, its ripples felt up a chair's backbone. For the first two seconds it could have been any of these or more. But with the third second feet stopped in their tracks, heads froze, listening for evidence, but already thinking those distant thoughts, the word so often spoken, but rarely used. Then suddenly the building jumped. Boom! The lights went out. Computer screens popped off. It jumped again. People scrambled for doorways and the shelter of desks. Another jolt. Now there could be no doubt. The questions became... how bad is it?... how long will it last?... did I find the right place to hide?... will the building keep standing?

Finally the last of the giant thumps eased into a strong, steady rocking, still no gentle fare. The floor challenged any foot to put itself into a designated spot. Those with window views watched tensely as the structure next door danced the two step with our own. Bodies braced for the possibility of ceiling tiles bailing out. Books and bookshelves dove to earth. For another thirty seconds or more the band played on. Then, as if the truck had rumbled on past and off into the next district it all stopped.

Dazed and dizzy feet slowly crawled out from under tables, hands willed themselves loose from door frames, and air began to flow in and out of lungs again. Was this the big one? Is this what we'd been waiting for for so many years? Just what happened?

On February 28, 2001, at 11:55 in the morning an earthquake had broken free in Puget Sound. At 6.8 on the open-ended Richter scale it was ranked as severe, but to the relief of a city claiming to be prepared for such crises but never quite sure, it happened 28 miles below the surface just into the Sound at the mouth of the Nisqually River between Tacoma and Olympia.

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TAKING THE TUBA

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about \$55 plus packing. Take it on the plane? \$70 for an extra bag but no packing and I'd have it when I got home. But I'd have to negotiate the airport with four bags and no federal mediator. Negotiations could break down. Daunting but doable.

At the Tampa airport on flight day we unloaded everything at the curb. The U.S. Air check-in line inside the terminal was substantial, but there was no one waiting for the Skycaps, so I asked if I could check it all in there. I've got an extra bag here, you know. Sure, no problem. A fiver tip seemed in order. Of course there was no request for extra baggage costs at curbside, which I assumed would be dealt with when I checked in. At the gate only verification of luggage tags was requested. No extra fee was ever imposed. Thus was the first hurdle vaulted.

The flight was scheduled to arrive in Seattle at 11:30PM. My truck was parked across the street at my office. I would need to leave my cargo at baggage storage, make haste to the vehicle and return forthwith before the storage office closed its Samsonite lids for the night, 12:30AM. The tightness of this schedule haunted me throughout the trip's first leg, like an unruly child perched in stealth mode on my seatback. As we ascended into the troposphere, bound now for the West Coast, the pilot announced Mother Nature had called her headwinds home for dinner and we would be arriving in Seattle an hour earlier than

scheduled. In all my years of flying, I had never experienced an early landing of that magnitude. And so we swerved cautiously around hurdle number two.

We did indeed arrive at 10:30PM. All luggage was in my possession within minutes of skidding to a halt at baggage claim. Now, how to move all this around? I'd resigned myself to the necessity of renting a \$2 cart to get to storage with, and probably again to traverse the distance to the garage. But in the money-munching rack was not a single cart to be found. As the headlights of Edvard Munch began to appear in my rearview mirror, I embarked on a search of the local area. To my surprise, relief, and sense of languor, I quickly located a cart, nearby, available, and unencumbered by fiscal requirements.

At storage, I was allowed to leave the cart with them, though no guarantee of its security was implied, should the little old lady from Pasadena request its use. But no worries, mate. After parking the truck, yet a few more carts that had escaped captivity taunted me as I approached the elevators, vowing never to be taken alive. How wrong they were. Quickly releasing my #4 lasso I brought down one of the stragglers, its lame wheel keeping it from the rest of the pack, and dragged it in tow to the terminal. Indeed its brother had wandered off, but no matter. It was now with the ease of slicing melted butter that the tale of the toted tuba terminated.

Was it fate? Was it meant to be? More likely meant tu-ba.

NISQUALLY QUAKE

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Had it been a few miles shallower Seattle and environs would have seen much that had not been seen in a very long time.

In most places destruction was limited to little more than odds and ends needing to be picked up, but quite a few others sustained costly damage. In Olympia, the capitol dome was nudged from its base and the building declared off limits for about a month. In downtown Seattle, particularly the area known as Pioneer Square, where older, brick structures predominate, several walls toppled, burying cars beneath them. The Alaska Way viaduct along the waterfront, a main traffic thoroughfare, required a solid six months of repair with lane restrictions that

caused traffic headaches during the period, and, of course, pointed out the need for alternatives to the aging structure. Boeing found structural damage in some of its office buildings at the Renton plant, and throughout the south end of the city in particular, chimneys and other masonry were commonly traumatized by the experience, not to mention the residents themselves.

Fortunately, this quake did not result in any deaths or serious injuries, but it could have, and the increased awareness of the potential for such events has helped everyone to be a little more prepared for the next one. Of course, it's difficult to schedule those out-of-town vacations that far in advance.

Welcome Houseguest

At the beginning of May, owing to problems she experienced at a place she'd lived for only a month, my long time friend, Donna, moved into my guest room. While we'd had our share of differences of opinion over the years, some of which were more animated than others, we'd also had many good times. This arrangement was intended to be just short-term while she took a little more time to find another place to live and let the experience of the last one fade. As it turned out her temporary job ended soon after moving in, making the idea of finding her own place daunting at best. Staying employed was a greater priority.



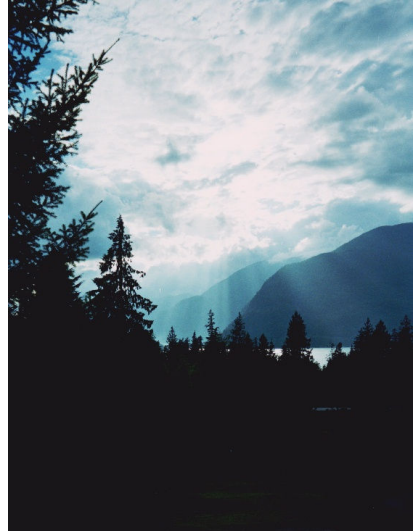
Paused and posed in Palm Springs.

As we now pass through the holidays I'm happy to say she's still here. I think it has been perhaps the greatest eye-opening experience of my life, maybe hers also. Our close association has allowed us to see many things that helped each of us grow in our own ways, including growing into better friends. Perspectives, observations, and opinions still differ, but that's just kept it interesting. I don't know how much longer she'll stay or under what circumstances, but I've genuinely enjoyed and appreciated the time she's spent here.

SUMMER VISITORS

Mom and Dad's annual summer visit to Seattle included Scott this year, at least for a few days. This time we tried a couple new things. With the Mariners baseball team doing so well we decided to take the whole crew to a ballgame. The home team lost, but it was a beautiful night and nevertheless full of great fun. Over the weekend we took advantage of the timeshare in Whistler, B. C., Canada, where, of course, we had our golf game as well as some time to wander the village.

Mimi and Linda had insisted that we reserve that Thursday night to go to dinner. I wasn't sure if our schedules would comfortably allow it but their (unusual) insistence led us to make a point to meet them. The restaurant was Salty's on Alki, a great if somewhat higher priced establishment on Elliott Bay across from downtown Seattle. Great views, great food, and as it turned out, great surprise, since the reason for it all turned out to be a celebration of my 50th birthday. It was great and I sin-



The sun breaks through over Howe Sound.

cerely thank all that contributed.

IS IT DEAD OR JUST SLEEPING?

Early in August, problems with my truck became increasingly evident. Despite considerable repair expenses the previous year, things quickly crept up and loomed ominously. It's possible that a small ruptured water hose led to more serious problems, but it's hard to say. The fact that I started losing coolant without leaving a drop on the pavement worried me considerably and I suspected another blown head gasket, something I'd already experienced twice before in that vehicle. The cost of such a repair, around \$800, along with the time required to do it and the possibility of more problems in the future made me decide to buy a new car. I looked for the cheapest, most economical, yet quality vehicle I could find, and ended up with a Hyundai Accent.

I still have the truck, which I now can bring into the garage and repair myself for a lot

less than a shop would charge and not have to worry about the time without it, but I also now get to make car payments again. That's OK. So far it's been worth it.



2001 Hyundai Accent

Governor Declares Seattle Drought

In July, Seattle and western Washington were officially declared in a drought. Last year's rainy season began with the promise of the usual moisture, but by early November, clouds had dried up and for the rest of the season rain in the lowlands and snow in the mountains were both hard to find. By summer, several reservoirs which normally generate hydro power, were literally dry. We were fortunate that a relatively cool summer and voluntary conservation allowed us to avoid mandatory restrictions. Ironically, as we head into the heart of this year's wet season, we have already had so much rain that we are at least an inch above normal for the year despite drought conditions for most of it. The ski areas are already jumping for joy, especially considering their early closures and sparse patronage last season.

Denver Dilemma

All right, places everyone! Lights, camera rolling, and... action! No, NO! CUT! CUT!

Yes, that's the way it felt. The beginning of March, my tenant of six years gave notice to vacate the Denver house. The weekend of April 7, a week after the house would be emptied, I flew back there to see how things looked. I had expected the worst and it was a good thing I did. It took most of Saturday to thoroughly inspect and document the conditions. If there was one saving grace, however, it was the fact that it was a gorgeous Colorado spring day.

After discounting the fact that six years of family residence naturally results in considerable wear and tear, some of the damage was certainly worthy of commentary, including holes in several walls, a plumbing system that was shut off because of leaking pipes, and a bullet hole or two. Is that worth a comment?

The tenant was a woman whose husband had left her several years earlier. She was raising two sons and a daughter on her own on the wages of a K-Mart checker, and collecting a monthly housing subsidy through the Denver

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DILBERT



THE BEAST OF MUSIC AWAKES AGAIN!

Highline Community Symphonic Band

With the acquisition of and reacquaintance with the tuba, I sincerely wanted to find an outlet for it. One of the first calls I made was to the Federal Way Symphony, thinking a small local orchestra might have room for someone serious but not terribly experienced. When they asked for a resumé I knew I was barking up the wrong tree. Through a co-worker I found out about the Highline Community Symphonic Band, a local group of some 70 volunteer musicians, and on September 10 began a new season of rehearsals with them.

One of the unexpected benefits was the opportunity to meet Michael Russell, principal tuba player of the Seattle Symphony for 32 years, freshly retired, and now playing with our humble ensemble. Michael studied at one time with Arnold Jacobs, the great Chicago Symphony icon, and brings with him knowledge and skills that are truly remarkable to those of us only dreaming of such achievements. I have begun to study with him and am hoping that between hard work and wise words I may be able to move myself upward within the musical circles.

Terrorist attacks and a Memoriam.

Ironically, the day after band rehearsals began was September 11, a day none of us is likely to ever forget. So many people were affected in so many different ways by the terrorist attacks of that morning. For some, old traumas were brought back to the surface, for others new ones were created. While my emotional response was one of incredulous horror, I rapidly settled into a fierce desire to provide some sort of memorial for the victims.

With my involvement in the band the natural response was to write a piece of music. By October 26 the short score for "In Memoriam 911" was complete. I am currently in the process of orchestrating the full score. Officially written for symphonic band, the piece may be more appropriate for full orchestra with the nuance that strings can produce. I've given a copy of the short score and an

The image shows a page of a musical score titled "In Memoriam 911 for Symphonic Band" by Jeffrey Taffel, Op. 4. The score is for a symphonic band and includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Bass Clarinet, Oboe, Horns (F, Eb, E, Bb), Trumpets (3, 2), Trombones (3, 2), Tuba, Euphonium, and Percussion 1. The music is in 4/4 time and consists of several measures of music. The percussion part includes a drum set and a cymbal.

electronic recording to our band director and if, once our holiday concerts are behind us, he chooses not to read it, I may turn either to other bands or rearrange for full orchestra and press in that direction. At this writing I have not yet produced a MIDI file that can be accessed via the internet, but may do so soon. I hope this will be a fitting tribute to those who died and continue to suffer from one of this century's monumental atrocities.

THE JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS OF OREGON

Almost since I moved to the Pacific Northwest more than 12 years ago, I've known of, wanted to visit, but never managed to get to the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in eastern Oregon. In mid-October I finally succumbed to the urge and justified it as a test run for the new car. In two days of near perfect weather I took 10 hikes covering about 9 miles total and drove more than 900 miles.

The national monument has three units located in generally the same area of the eastern Oregon high plains, but actually one to two driving hours apart. Each is distinctly different and outstanding in it's own right. The main feature of the Clarno Unit is the Palisades, a series of cliffs formed when ash-filled mudflows buried an ancient forest. At the Painted Hills Unit, layers of ash were worn into brilliantly colored hills by various conditions of weathering. The Sheep Rock Unit is full of badlands type weathered formations, mud which is continually eroded revealing rich fossils as they are worn away. The majority of fossils found in all locations are of vegetable matter, but the landscapes also provide a considerable record of mammals and other animals spanning the period of about 10 to 50 million years ago.



View from the Blue Basin Overlook in the Sheep Rock Unit

So much attention is paid to dinosaur digs these days that the relatively more recent animals tend to be overlooked. This was a good opportunity to see what we were missing.



Could they be called anything but the Painted Hills?

A PALM SPRINGS THANKSGIVING

During the Thanksgiving week I headed once more for Palm Springs, CA to escape the early part of Seattle's rainy season. I spent the first three and a half days there by myself. Donna would join me on Thanksgiving for the remainder of the week.

The weather was gorgeous during that initial period. I managed two days of golf on either side of a long hike through the Indian Canyons. Evenings I took the opportunity to try some new and different restaurants, thoroughly enjoying every one.

On Thanksgiving morning Donna began her day of travel experiences, and they proved to be out of the ordinary. She had no luggage to check but had one carryon bag and a purse. When she went through security the xray revealed a small set of jewelers screwdrivers with removeable bits, the kind you would use to tighten eyeglass screws. They told her she could not take them on the plane and that she'd have to go back to the Alaska counter and check them. At the ticket counter they were anything but accomodating, apparently unwilling to box and check it, and ultimately suggesting she put it in an envelope and mail it to herself. This would, of course, require her to find a stamp and a postal receptacle in addition to the other package preparation. She was running late and didn't have time. The manager (who turned out not to be a manager after all) was not helpful either. She was effectively forced to throw the set away.

She went back through security sans screwdrivers, under exactly the same conditions, and passed this time without difficulty, but barely making her flight.

As she was unpacking after arriving in Palm Springs, she was looking in her purse and discovered, much to her surprise, that she had a pocket knife with about a 3 1/2" blade stuffed

down in the bottom. It was not intentional, she forgot it was there.

On the return trip which we took together, I myself had made sure to put all items of any concern into my checked baggage, including her knife, scissors I had, nail clippers, and a disposable razor (which you couldn't remove the blade from if you wanted to, but which is also not allowed on board.) We both walked through security in Palm Springs without a hitch. As we were flying the first leg back to San Francisco, she was again rummaging in her purse, stopped for a moment, looked at me incredulously, then pulled out a box cutter, which, once again, she'd forgotten was there. As she did so I suddenly thought to look in my own pocket and realized I had a very small pocket knife that I'd forgotten to put in the checked bag.

It is totally amazing to me that Sea-Tac security should have been so concerned about those tiny screwdrivers that they overlooked a 3 1/2" knife and a boxcutter. Is it incompetence or a level of paranoia that defeats

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The alluring oasis of Palm Canyon

Airline Foibles

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the whole purpose of the "extra" security measures? Then too, the lack of cooperation and consideration on the part of Alaska, especially in view of the additional difficulties passengers are experiencing these days, does not make their staff look particularly good.



Sunset over the San Jacintos

Cleaning Up the Mess

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Housing Authority. Whether she knew it or not is unknown, but neighborhood sources more than suggested that drugs were being sold by her sons. Possibly no more than marijuana, the consequences of a bust could still have been severe not only to the boys but to me as owner of the house. Rumor had it that the house had been under surveillance by the police for some time and may have been close to action. Had a breakin not occurred, during which the mother of these devious dopes was pistol whipped by the intruder, she and they might have stayed longer. Two drive-by shootings over the previous two years no doubt aided in her decision. Had I known what was going on she would not have needed to decide.

So began the process of repair, a process still ongoing. While I was there, I found a new tenant, at least appearances would suggest. With all the work necessary he was very willing to exchange his sweat for rent and it made sense to me at the time. He pointed out the hardwood floors, of which I was unaware, and ultimately finished them, apparently to everyone's satisfaction. (I haven't actually seen them.) He did some wall repair and painting, kitchen upgrades, and yard cleaning, and helped coordinate a complete plumbing system replacement. He was anxious to rent this house since it was only a few blocks from his mother's where he stayed while the major repairs were under way. Officially he moved in the first of August, but unfortunately one thing he forgot to do was pay rent. He managed to send copies of receipts for repair expenses, but never sent the hours worked, never paid deposits, and never put utilities in his name, consequently not paying them either. It has finally become necessary, as of December 1, to hire a property manager, something I'd hoped to avoid.

Harriet's Passing

Dad's sister Harriet Aide passed away this Spring. She was a very nice person if one of the more eccentric members of the family. Strong in her own convictions, elements of which occasionally spilled into the lives of others, both good and bad, she also had a very generous heart leaving most of her accumulated fortune to charity. She died on March 12.

More expenses loom and the tenant may vacate soon either for reasons of his own or due to legal action on our part, in either case leaving me with the remaining repairs and associated costs. This is not the best time of the year for that. Needless to say, there will likely be more stories on this in the future. At least the weekend in Denver was enjoyable, especially the accommodations provided by a good friend living in the nearby mountains. Steve, if your out there, bud, thanks again!



The kitchen needs some work