

May 1, 2011

## *Morgan's Moment...*

Life is full of tornadoes...  
unexpected unstoppable  
unwelcome.

I once published a booklet  
for tornado times...  
"Coming About!"

I dug out an old copy the other day  
for a friend stunned by life  
and opened to these words:

"Ice...  
and slow thaw  
then rain...  
floods.

None pleasant...  
only to be  
outlasted.

But finally...  
with time and faith  
sun again.

There are times  
when you just  
have to believe it."

— Art Morgan

## BOOK CORNER

Is a Kindle a book? Is it worthy of Gutenberg's wondrous invention? Can you call something without a cover or pages that turn, a book?

Do people really savor and enjoy and ponder a Kindle like the do a book? Or do they tend to skim as when reading emails or internet information — or email blue sheets?

I believe we are about to find out, as a traveling virtual library machine has appeared at our door. I would be interested to hear real life experiences of Kindle users. Is there really a viable substitute for a book in hand?

Anyway, I want to report that John Bristow's "*What Paul Really Said About Women*" is available in email form, which I presume means Kindle. It's a book well worth reading that challenges ages of misunderstanding on this subject.

**NOTE: THURSDAY MOMENT  
FOR MAY 5 IS CANCELED**

## THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

Let's talk for a minute about the next 20 years. That people in my age category could survive so long is scary. We might have to live with the consequences of our politics and life-style rather than shoving it into the hands of our children and grandchildren!

Will we be out of Iraq and Afghanistan and Middle East conflicts in the next ten years — or 20? Will we still be fighting for oil and arguing about whether global warming is real? Will we be continuing to deplete earth's resources as though there are no limits? Will we be wedded to an American level life-style that is already depleting earth's eco-system?

I wonder whether we will still be trying to make the trickle down economic model of the Reagan era work. Will we be trying to improve schools and universities by taking away their funding? Will we be voting for policies that for the past 20 years have virtually done away with a viable middle class? Will we be able to continue an essentially a-moral type of society that has repeatedly voted for policies that have resulted in an enormous wealth increase for those at the top? An article in the April 19, 2011 Christian Century ("*Moral Community: No Common Good?*" by Gary Dorrien) reports widely reported reality:

***One percent of the U.S. population holds between 34 and 39 percent of the nation's wealth; the top 5 percent hold between 66 and 72 percent of the wealth; and the bottom 50 percent hold 2 percent of the wealth.***

I am wondering whether the "no new taxes" mantra will be all that politicians have to tell us about where they will lead us in the next 20 years. How many more tax credits and loopholes will be granted to wealthy individuals and corporations to join companies like General Electric, Exxon-Mobile, Bank of America and Citibank that paid no income taxes.

I guess that anyone interested in being around during the next 20 years needs to ask whether the policies and values of the past 20 years offer hope for the kind of life we believe in.

It is probably typical old timer talk. The world has often been seen as going to hell in a hand basket by geezers who have lost hope. The future always happens, at least it has so far! But what kind of future can it be?

My last thought is to question whether anyone can claim that we are a Christian nation (as polls say most claim us to be) or even a moral nation, when so many millions are increasingly falling into the ranks of poverty. History has demonstrated (and is now demonstrating) that when wealth is concentrated in the hands of the few and increasing masses are left out of the economic process, revolution results. Can we last another 20 years of more of the same without disastrous results?

I just came home from the family birthday party, held early so all could attend. I received gifts and affection. They sang. I blew out candles. I still wonder about the next 20 years. They reminded me that for them the future is now — and that they are ready for it.

## CENTENARIANS BOOMING

### Thoughts on my 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

My early dawn slumber spent listening to public broadcasting morning news was jolted into wide awake mode. My radio reported that “*The number living to be 100 and beyond has doubled in the past 20 years and is due to double again by 2020.*” (Also reported by Matt Sedensky of AP) Is this good news or bad news? Can a royal wedding or another tornado beat that?

There was a time when most people accepted the verdict of Psalm 90 that “*the years of our life are three score and ten, or by reason of strength four score.*” This is one biblical directive fairly closely followed in our time. No matter that in biblical times very few reached that age. In recent days I was feeling pretty confident and a bit smug about my casual approach to the “reason of strength” age. In fact, I’ll be celebrating that recent reality May 9.

As with most biblical teachings, one should begin by asking, “*Who said so?*” Should we totter off into the unknown world just because the Bible says it’s time? More and more Americans, at least, are disobeying the Bible and wandering on into their 80’s and 90’s. If you haven’t attended someone’s 100th birthday party you’re traveling in a slow crowd. If you are expecting to live a few years longer it appears that you’ll have to attend more such parties.

Which means, of course, that the old Psalm must be updated. The years of our life are now moved up to *four score*, and by God, by reason of strength *five score!* You baby boomers need to re-think retirement plans, re-think voting away Medicare, re-think neglecting to fix Social Security. You need to floss your teeth and cut the carbs and sugars and get in shape just in case you are one who lives to join the fastest growing segment of our population. You might want to pay a bit more attention to global environmental issues that seem sure to worsen unless something is done in our immediate life time. There are a number of things that could make aging unhappy for those whose lot it is to live to be 100.

Many of us have already reached the “fending off age” during which survival requires being alert to subversive bodily attacks. We also worry that every lapse of memory, or tremble or stumble may be a sign of a final assault. We think of the kinds of disabling conditions that would make us unhappy to live to be a centenarian. There are lots of kinds of living that are worse than death.

I take cheer from knowing some bright folks well into their tenth decade. I wouldn’t be surprised to see any of them reach the five score mark. We visited one in Chino Hills CA on our recent spring trip. She is a bit house-bound, but her mind travels the world, her pen talks to several every day, she reads what’s going on in the world, and makes a difference to many by the vitality of her life and spirit. I hear from several others who are full of life and glad to be in that new wave of American citizens.

I accept my personal years of life survival in awe of those who have blazed a trail that I would be pleased to follow. By reason of strength, four score? The bar has been raised to four score and ten, at least, and maybe to five score!

Anyone knows that life is uncertain, that years don’t measure life value, that good genes, good friends, good living and good luck play their part. Most of us won’t reach the century mark. But it’s not bad to know that it is being done. The years of our life are four score and ten, or by reason of strength five score! I heard it on the morning news.

— Art Morgan, April 30, 2011