

Waiting

17 July, 2020

My current bedtime reading is *Keepers of the Light* by Donald Graham. It's a fascinating history of the lighthouse keepers of the British Columbia Coast. I've been reading it a chapter at a time for a couple months and I'll be sorry when I'm done.

Anyhoo, a passage caught my fancy last night when he described the occupations of the largely unemployed populace of a small, economically depressed town as "fishing, trapping and waiting."

Waiting as an occupation. It got me to thinking about my own current status. Mind you, I enjoy full employment and have worked from my home office since long before Covid came to call, so I'm not talking about my occupation so much as how I keep myself occupied.

As I waited for sleep, I got the thinkies and spent the next hour or so considering the idea of waiting as a primary pursuit. I realized 'waiting' is a fair description of how I spend entirely too much of my time these days. Please don't visualize me sitting on the porch bench, watching the world go by. I wouldn't call that mere waiting. That would be a perfectly laudable exercise in doing something useful; namely, sitting on the porch bench, watching the world go by.

No, I'm talking about the time I spend half-listening to old sitcom reruns whilst I view videos of people doing stupid things on You Tube. Or letting the You Tube algorithms decide what I watch next until I couldn't for the life of me tell you how I ended up watching a video of a monster truck rally. (Yes, it's possible I have a You Tube problem but for now, that's not my theme.) The other day, I watched a how-to on hammer forging, a process I already basically understood and that I find thoroughly uninteresting. I hope we can agree this is probably not the best possible use of my free time.

I will make another admission here – by 'free time' I mean that portion of my day I would formerly have used in pursuits I now know I can live without. Running to the store for a single, non-staple item. Going to the woodworkers' supply just to browse and no, I've never been able to browse without buying but again, another topic. You get the idea.

Living in a pseudo quarantine has opened up a fair chunk of space in my day. I've filled some of it with woodworking and some with writing. I've extended my work days to get done with an important project. But more and more, I find myself engaged in non-pursuits that might best be described as not pursuing much of anything. In other words, waiting.

I'm going to put some thought behind this in the next hours and days and weeks. Perhaps we all should.