

## Chapter 18

### Differences

Tom and I were raised in two different worlds. I grew up on a dairy farm in central Utah. Tom spent his youth in a Samoan rain forest. Tom has always edged and mowed the lawn. While I rake, trim, and maintain the yard. For my father taught me to be a good steward of the earth.

When I discovered large branches falling from five diseased Russian Olive trees, I knew it was time to cut them down. In addition I noticed dead branches on the pine resting on some lower branches. A strong wind could easily knock them down. This posed a threat to parked cars, joggers or any school children passing by.

A Samoan tree cutter stopped while I was raking one day to offer help. Joe said he had a “spiritual impression” to stop by that day. I credited Steve as it was March 6, 2014, the nineteenth anniversary of his death. Joe looked over the job and made me an offer I could not refuse. Knowing that Tom would insist on saving the trees, I sent an e-mail to my sisters and to his rather unreliable Hotmail account describing the project.



When Tom discovered I had contracted the work without consulting him. He became irate. Knowing that my sisters and brother-in-laws would understand, I suggested that he complain to them rather than to me. I'd heard "leave it as is" much too often. So often in fact, that I've threatened to have "Here lies Thomas A. Stokoe -- as is!" chiseled on his tombstone. Luckily I had hired Samoan tree surgeons. Tom would not be calling them and cancel the job.

My dear Ron, Everett, Laraine and Corinne,

By chance I have discovered my wife's secret e-mail to you detailing her intention to cut down the six trees between our driveway and the Meads' fence, plus the removal by Dean of the beautiful 23 yard wooden slat fence that he agonized sweating great drops of blood to build.

I, the priesthood authority, was never consulted on this. She is breaking her temple covenant by not seeking, referring to, and listening to the counsel of her husband. Let it be duly known among you that I am 1,000% opposed to this project. I grew up in the jungles of Samoa with birds chirping happily among the branches. The jungles gave me pleasure, a beautiful haven to live within, and the birds brought immeasurable joy. Trees are my home, my solace, my palace, refuge and paradise. I love trees, I love them immensely.

These six trees are the homes of several birds who chirp each day bringing me great delight and contentment. They nest among the trees and multiply and replenish the earth as instructed. They are a tribute to our property, the neighborhood, and the contentment of my soul. . .

These stately trees bring shade to the front of our property, refuge against the hot sun and during the winter, they are adorned with snowflakes of exquisite beauty and charm. In spring they bring forth white feathery blooms, silky-soft that float in the breeze. In the summer, some ornament themselves with pine cones and are perpetually cloaked through the year with pine needles. . . I cherish the trees, I love the trees, they are my visual joy and primeval shelter and the births that dwell and chirp upon their branches are my constant joy.

The wooden fence that Dean constructed under great physical duress during his body riddled drug days, is a beautiful sight in the neighborhood. We have been complimented on this fence many times. Dean had to dig up 8 rotting posts cemented into the ground and replace them. The task exhausted him and he could only work a couple of hours a day before his ravaged body gave out on him. The finished fence was a huge task, but a great source of accomplishment. . . To dismantle it is to shamble his ego.

My dear wife, or should I say "non-compliance wife", grew up surrounded by cow pastures adorned with cow pies. She did not experience the beauty of being surrounded by trees and the song of birds – just the smell of pasture, the barn, silo and perpetual cow manure. There was no jungles for her to thrive within, vines to climb, and birds to shoot with a sling shot.

It is with deep sadness and chagrin that I express my thoughts to you. I will oppose the destruction of these six trees and the home and playground of nature's birds, and if there is a rift in our marriage and we go our separate ways, you will know the cause.

Aloha, Tom



*March, 2014 - Preparing to remove five trash trees and one large pine.*

Dear Tom,

Thank you for expressing the heartfelt feelings you have for your trees. You are so very blessed to so eloquently be able to express your love for your trees and the birds that love them as well. I can relate, somewhat, as I enjoy the tree directly behind our big window in our living room. I enjoy being able to look out and see our yard during all seasons; spring, summer, fall and winter. The tree directly behind the window is comforting to me as various birds come to eat out of the food in the bird feeder Eryn gave Ron many years ago for his birthday. I refer to these birds as our "pets".

Is there any problem regarding the trees perhaps falling and doing any damage to your home, or someone else's home? The tree to the west of our home had a huge limb that was a threat to our home and the neighbor's garage, so we had to cut that limb down. Last summer I paid to have the biggest part of the tree also cut down but could not afford more. I would like to have what is left removed.

You know, I had never thought about how you are exactly right about where we grew up. I do remember running through the tall corn growing in the field, walking through the alfalfa on our way to milk cows in our barn. Across the street were the bull rushes. It was fun to pick and color the cat tails with crayons after we removed the brown covering. We did live in a beautiful area with Utah Lake on the west, the mountains toward the east. I can relate to your feelings. I

felt safe, carefree and loved during those growing up years and if your trees help you remember the days of your youth as you have expressed, I am so very sorry.

I look forward to our temple day on Tuesday. I feel so very blessed to be able to share that day with my husband, sisters and brothers!

Much Love, Laraine



With the trees felled our side yard looked like a hurricane had hit. We posted “free fire wood” signs. Many people stopped by. Some came with pickups to haul the wood away. We had the stumps pulverized. Tom paid two Mexicans to have what remained hauled off. I had the trees in the front yard shaped and trimmed. We had our plumb tree in the back garden pruned.





Dean rebuilt the fence and replaced three posts damaged by the falling trees. Stumps were pulverized and areas leveled. Excess dirt and woodchips were hauled to the back yard.

### **May 11, 2014 - Dean's accident**

Dean dismantled the old hot tub which had become a hotel for rats over the past two years. He hauled it to the curb behind the Ford Explorer. By Sandy clean-up day we had branches, patio decking and lots many other items out on the curb. While unhooking the chain on the hot tub the wrench he was using broke in half. Dean flew backwards into the street. He landed hard, twisted his leg and breaking his ankle. I used Matrix Energetics to minimize the effects of the accident and Dean noticed some improvement. At the 39<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic Dr. Robert Horne, who had specializing in setting broken bones before his retirement, look at Dean's X-rays. He said he would definitely need surgery and likely several pins. Dean had broken the other ankle years earlier and was not looking forward to surgery and a long recovery. So he called in the Psychic Surgeons (an energy therapy technique.)

Shortly thereafter Dean began to feel spacy, as if he were going under an anesthetic. Spiritual entities began to manipulate his leg. He felt his broken ankle bone moving back into place. On

June 2<sup>nd</sup> the surgeon scheduled to operate discovered that Dean's ankle was healing. Perplexed, he asked what kind of boot he was using. "One that my step father bought for at D.I.," Dean replied. This doctor ordered more X-rays. After checking them carefully he decided that the ankle was on the mend – less than a 4 mm variance - surgery was not needed.



*Minutes before Dean broke his ankle when his wrench broke and he fell backwards.*

**June 6 – 12, 2014.** Landscapers arrived and began tearing out the old Fetzers and some mold ridden bushes. They brought in new sod and planted Hornbeam trees and bushes along the back fence. Wood chips and dirt from the front was hauled to the back yard and dumped in the garden which they tilled. Metal edging was installed around the lawn making it easier to mow. However root pulverizers knocked out our sprinkling system in the back. A repairman replaced eight damaged PVC pipes, but failed to flush out the system as Dean instructed him to do. Consequently most of the pipes in the back yard clogged up when the water was turned on. The entire system in the back had to be replaced. I had to hand water to keep things alive.

**On June 13** a rain storm revitalized the lawn and saved some plants that were dying. Dean designed a new sprinkling system to replace the old leaky clogged system.

**June 18 – 25<sup>th</sup>** – "Stamped Concrete" workers arrived the day after the landscape crew left. The synchronicity was amazing. We used eight different crews and the workers never overlapped.



**June 21** – Our grandson Andrew, out of town on the day he was scheduled, arrived to power wash, oil shake shingles on the roof and repair old trim on the shed the next week. He cut tops off the hornbeam trees and prepared things for the painters. His timing was perfect.

**June 26** - Another rain storm cleared out dust left by the concrete workers, revitalized the lawn and saved some young plants. June, July and August rain storms set a record for the most rain to fall during summer months in Utah.

**June 27** Dean and Ron dug up the old sprinkling system and layed new PVC pipe. The control box was moved from the front to the back patio where people would not trip over it.



**June 30 – July 3<sup>rd</sup>** Our two painters were fast and efficient. They painted the house and shed in just three and a half days. Which gave Dean and Ron time to finish installing the new sprinkling system before July 4<sup>th</sup> when hot weather arrived in earnest.



Though June is normally a dry month mother nature and hand watering kept the new sod and plants alive until the new sprinkling system was installed and functional.



Painters Sam and Jordan did a “honey of a job.” We rewarded them with bottles of honey.



Ron Kent came by daily to adjust the sprinkling system, change heads and install new ones. Everett Young came up twice from Provo to attach the lattice stands to the fence for our climbing rose bushes. We planted vegetables and spent countless hours cleaning and reorganized the boxes in the garage in the shed. Then we painted both floors.

We seniors should think about downsizing and discarding before we pass on. Otherwise our children are left with a tedious and thankless job. In June, 2010 Tom retired from Mountain Ridge Jr. High and came home with boxes of lesson plans to store. The following year Dean closed his Home Repair business in California and returned with tools and equipment which needed to be housed. Neil and Corrine moved to California in April leaving six boxes and two bikes with us. I had many boxes of family history, genealogy and subtle energy books crowding shelves. We sent a suitcase of clothes and supplies to missionaries in Zimbabwe. We discarded and donated lots to D. I. knowing that one cannot take everything with them into the future.

**September 20<sup>th</sup>** The work is finished and we are enjoying the benefits. With the trash trees gone it's easier to mow now. With metal edging extensive trimming is no longer needed. While cleaning out the garage I found Grandma's 1965 history written in Samoan which Tom translated it. I also discovered transcripts of the interviews I did when Tom's parents were visiting in 1985 and used them to update and expand the family history. In addition I came across other material which I posted online. Dean lives with us now and serves as our property manager. He can find his tools and equipment easily. Perhaps Tom's learned what we were told on the mission: "Sometimes the spirit speaks through the quiet, gentle voice of a wife."



We have more time for genealogy and temple work now.

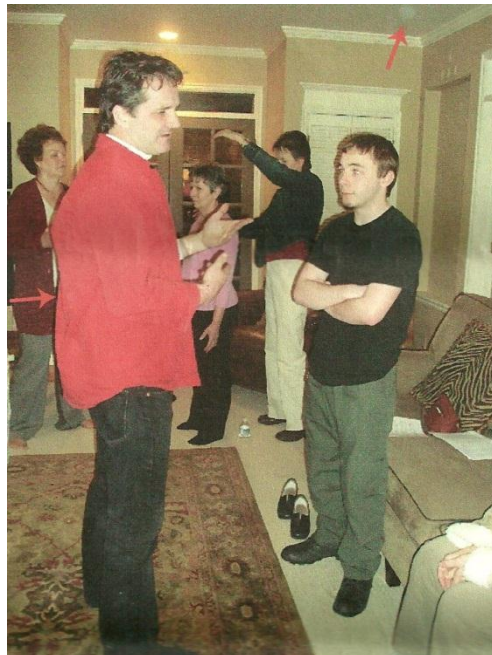
Tom and I came from two different worlds. He graduated from high school in Western Samoa with five others. I was among 265 students who graduated from Orem High that same year. We are both passionate about promoting education, supporting the arts and rendering service.



We are both retired educators. I retired in 2007 after teaching and/or working as a librarian for 25 years. Tom reluctantly retired in 2010 after teaching 41 years -- 31 at Skyline, 1 year at Churchill Jr. High and 9 years at Mountain Ridge Jr. High. He spent one year at Point of the Mountain working as an administrator assisting with S.L.C.C.'s prison education program. I became interested in energy medicine when Steve died in 1995. I took classes and practiced energy medicine for the next 16 years along with my son Dean. We are certified biofeedback therapists. We established "Energy Therapies" for pain relief, regeneration and rehabilitation in 2005 and hosted Matrix Energetics practice groups from 2006 through January, 2012. We have received many benefits and lots of satisfaction from working in this emerging new field.



One night I became very upset with my husband for once again, Tom was staying late at school. I began to wonder if he would even notice should I simply disappear. So I got in the car and drove to the Kents where I spent the night. I awoke the next morning feeling bad about my irresponsible behavior. I'd not left a note. I dressed quickly and walked home forgetting about the car. I settled myself on the couch in the family room. When Tom came down for breakfast and saw me, he was greatly relieved. He asked what had happened and where I'd been all night. Tom knew I was having amazing experiences with my Matrix Practitioners (pictured.) "I've been here on the couch all night in an alternate universe," I replied. He believed me.



Then he asked about the missing car. "I must have left it in the other universe! I'll go back and get it later." I said. Once again he totally believed me. Tom takes everything literally. After all, we are from two different worlds and quite frequently, occupy alternate and parallel universes.