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Editorial - My Wonderful Neighbors

This holiday season please keep in your prayers my wonderful, generous and loving Cuban neighbors who have helped so many. This husband and wife are always lending a hand, sharing their food and compassion to those in need. I have even seen them serve Cuban coffee to County workers.

My neighbors are alone in this country; they have no family. They speak no English and I speak no Spanish yet we are able to communicate. A few years ago an older woman moved in next to them and began a constant crusade of harassment against the Cubans. She reported them for everything but the kitchen sink while she was destroying mangroves on State property to

improve her view and enlarge her yard. She deliberately sprayed paint on their house, shined a bright light into their bedroom window and threw trash over their fence. She just won't quit. The Cubans were planning to sell their home and move to escape the misery.

Now my Cuban neighbors are spending much of their time in Miami hospitals because the husband has been diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. Even with him battling for his life, the old lady continues her siege of hate by flooding their house and air conditioner with her hose!

Please pray or send positive vibes to my neighbors and all families battling cancer and people with mental illness.

I Loved the Road Life — A blog by Luke Sommer Glenn

Four Post Meridiem (4PM) and the band begins to stir. Coffee to be sought out, morning joint to be smoked, teeth to be brushed... The start of the musicians day. I left out the morning bowel movement part on purpose. I mean nobody wants to hear the story of the motel toilet that was plumbed to the hot water and every time you sat on it you got an ass steaming. Made the toilet paper stick to your cheeks. It was more unpleasant than it sounds, nothing quite like the smell of percolating turds.

It was too fattening and generally unhealthy to eat restaurant food (especially fast food) for every meal but as a young musician that, "ain't here for a long time just a good time," I generally sought out bacon, eggs and grits in the south or potatoes of some kind up north. We called it the grit line, similar to the Mason-Dixon Line. You could also call it the sweet tea line.

Some places didn't have breakfast close by, so it would be a peanut butter sandwich if times were good or crackers and A1 if things were thin. Traveling, you learn to borrow condiments from the places that you stay. If you have to eat a shit sandwich somewhere down the line a little mayonnaise makes it go down slightly easier.

For 12 rough-and-tumble years or so, I didn't have to pay rent because I lived in motels, band houses/trailers and with random girls. When that failed I just stayed in my van. There were always the stopovers with relatives as long as you didn't wear out your welcome.

This particular band was based out of the Orlando

area when I was hired to be the lead guitar player of The Photons, as in, "fire photon torpedos." Musicians are nerds, they were a bunch of Trekkies. So much so that when the bass player got married, his bride walked down the aisle to the theme from Star Trek, the Next Generation. I pushed the play button on the ghetto blaster. Yeah, they're still married.

I got to see America. Not just the local tourist traps but we played in places like Valentine, Nebraska. The motel they put the band up in there had an old style, picture tube TV that got so hot we were afraid to leave any of our stuff in the room.

We sat several cans of beanie weenies on top of it. Six hours later we were amazed to find the TV still working and our beanie weenies had swelled up the cans slightly but they were nice and hot. It was better than sink noodles again.

Sink noodles are Ramen noodles prepared using the scalding hot water to cook the noodles in the motel room hand-basin. It's better than being hungry anyway. The hot water at my house doesn't come close to being that hot. We soon bought a hot plate and a pot at a Wally World in Topeka, Kansas.

There was a crew of Topeka police officers doing a bicycle safety thing at the store. The clerk at the checkout forgot to neutralize the anti-shoplifter electronic counter measure on our \$10 hot plate. We forgot to get the receipt. When the alarm went off we froze in place.

It was loud and attracted the attention of the entire store. Everybody in the place was looking hard at us - long

haired, ragged looking ne'er-do-wells... Then the other customers turn to the police to react.

Only one officer was an actual bicycle patrol cop. The others were overweight public relations officers that didn't interact with criminals. I guess the four of us looked pretty intimidating to those locals. The officers looked at each other feeling the pressure of the customers' and employees eyes upon them to do something about us.

From our perspective we're shitting in our pants. We don't want to go to jail in Topeka, Kansas. The patrol cop and my drummer immediately eye each other up as the most aggressive of any of the participants. People who enjoy fighting seek each other out. But luckily for us the clerk who had checked us out came running up to us with the receipt in hand and we were allowed to leave under the uneasy glare of the locals.

Some places are welcoming and warm and other places made you feel like if they could shoot you and get away with it they would. Traveling through the south we would find these areas we would call radio Hell. The only stations you could find were gospel programming and preachers.

No rock, no country, it was amazing. Radio hell. We always tried to find a local station on our way to a new gig in a new town to get a feel for the area.

Somewhere in south west Alabama is such an area. We drove for hours to get to this bar in the twilight zone. We could play you a rock show.

We could play you a country show. We could play a Guess Who tribute show. We played

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everything from Johnny Cash to the Beatles, Pink Floyd to Hank Williams. Yet the people at this bar had never heard any of the songs on our playlist. The only entertainers that existed to them was Elvis Presley, Johnny Rivers and Maybelle Carter.

It was supposed to be a four-night stay but they fired us after our first set for the very reason that they didn't know any of our music and they didn't think anybody would show up to listen to us. They paid us for the night but I personally think someone realized they had busted their budget. I'm sure the booking agent made their life as miserable as possible with threats of a lawsuit and being blacklisted and what not.

In that band the drummer and the rhythm guitar player got all the chicks. The bass player and I did all the singing and were the best musicians of the group but it's strange how some people are just naturally slutty and they attract other sluts. I wanted to be a slut really bad but the opportunity never presented itself for whatever reason. I always seemed to find the girls that wanted to talk all night. The bass player had a steady girl and wasn't interested in chasing chicks. He took great pains to stay away from unwanted attention.

Did you know that Nebraska has a replica of Stone Henge in the form of white washed automobiles? Great place to drop acid.