

LOSING SOLITUDE

By Martin Murie



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CITIZENS!!! Do you know the torrent of lies that are pouring down?

The wars, Climate Change, vanishing species, health care, lay--offs?

The dogs of violence are let loose on this beautiful planet. How can we stay on the sidelines watching the destruction? I can't believe our slavish acquiescence, but the silence is convincing. Are we trained poodles, kow-towing slaves, fearful creatures? Where are the steadfast stands for free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment, carried out by "One Big Union," aka "the Wobblies," on street corners in days of yore? Where are the midwest farmers who turned sheriffs' auctions into five cent bids? Do we sit in armchairs every night and watch smiling pussies tell us that all is well--banks are showing profits again; it will not be long before the economy picks up, maybe before Christmas.

When transportation charges are added to the price of one gallon of gasoline, delivered to Afghanistan, the price reaches \$100.

The war budget tied to foreign wars is robbing our domestic programs. Every county, every city in our nation is having severe budget problems. But that's only the tip of the iceberg. What about the kills we make, every day, in Afghanistan and Pakistan? What about those

drones flying for hours over villages, finally releasing their load of bombs on households where dubious intelligence bought from citizens with a grudge, tells the drones, piloted from Creech Air Base in Nevada, that one or more al Qaeda big-wigs are in that house?

Let's get up close to real war. It is watching friends die. It is bloated bodies. It is the blast of an Improvised Explosive Device--the establishment is very clever in naming things. War is about digging in rubble to find bodies, civilian and military. It is about armed soldiers lurching through hospitals. It is about fear. The enemy is fearful, our soldiers are fearful; civilians scatter when a drone shows up. Drone attacks are cowardice in action, let's not draw back from that accusation. Civilians die by the dozens as the wars grind on, flesh and blood and wounded-for-life are the products.

What do newspapers and TV and talk radio make of these slaughters? They lie by omission. How often do you see a bloated body, smell its stink described? How often do you see a civilian woman or child or man or soldier struggling to live and finally giving in to death? Quotations from generals or retired generals or high-up reporters fill the airwaves. There are blatant lies too: all will be well, just be patient.

My patience ran out long time ago. It's time, citizens of this "democracy," to get out on the streets with homemade signs. It is

time for "embedded" journalists to tell us the truth of war, not the sanitized reports about soldiers' fear and how they follow orders in spite of that, go out to face death, every day or every night.

Obama's being given the Peace Prize is a cruel joke. His speech in Oslo will be his usual style, intelligent rhetoric, promises that will never be fulfilled. Our president is addicted to bi-partisanship. Translation: pleasing everybody.

That brings me to the crux of this bloody rant. Middle of the

road won't work, it never has and never will. What we desperately need right now are points-of-view, statements, essays, novels, poems, that will please some and anger others. The rich grow richer on the spoils of doing nothing about Climate Change; fomenting wars and not serving in them; raking in fat bonuses and making sure that there are hundreds of lobbyists in D.C. to keep the corporations strong, piling up greater short-term profits.

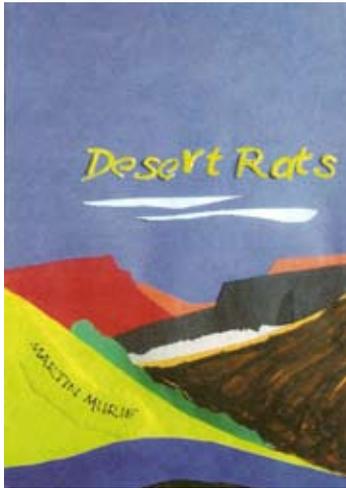
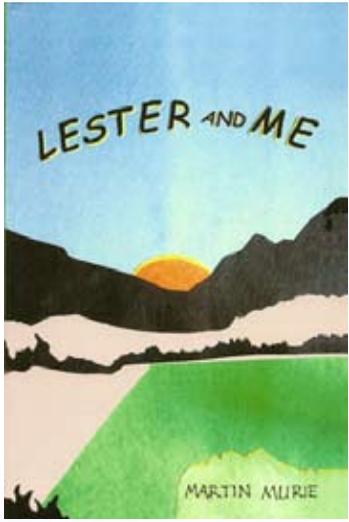
We are hopelessly in love with the shreds of a lifestyle that is strangling the planet. I am learning from Bonner McAllister who writes an honest column

in the Monterey News in Massachusetts. She is actively, not waiting around, reducing her personal footprint, using public transport, walking to buy food, taking home-grown produce with her as she journeys from home. So far I have walked to the post office to buy stamps and to the hardware to buy light bulbs. I hope to learn more. These little ventures are practice for the huge changes in life style that lie ahead of all of us.

My memories of combat in WWII disturb my sleep at times, and these visits are hard to take., but I make up for it by rants such as this one, and attending street protests. Wars cut into domestic programs, such as Single Payer Health initiative, unemployment insurance. We live in a human ecosystem where everything is interconnected. To save the earth, to stop wars, to abolish health-for-profit, to bring back the era of high wage jobs and a host of other measures that have to be taken very, very seriously right now, we need local street protests, and that includes intellectuals--there is no reason on this earth for intellectuals to feel that it is beneath their dignity to join street actions. Might lose your job? Consider the consequences for the earth, for humanity, and there are plenty of job-seekers out there you can join.

In "The Mythology of Imperialism," Jonah Raskin quotes one of Joseph Conrad's heroes.:





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“The words one knows so well have a nightmarish meaning . . . liberty, patriotism, government--all of them have a flavour of folly and murder.”

This book was written in 1971! It's time for citizens to show high courage. Protests are, contrary to widespread opinion, learning academies. You lose arrogance, you reach out to people and you learn how to do that. .

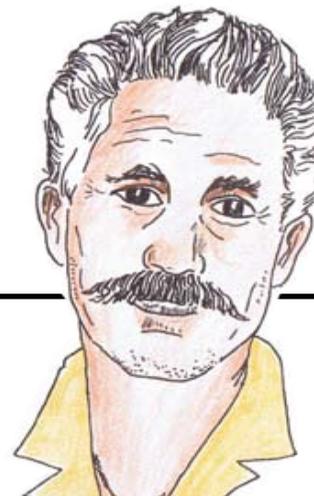
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Martin



PROTESTING WARS

Photograph at left...The Vietnam Moratorium 1969
Above...Last week in Ohio....the ranks are thinning

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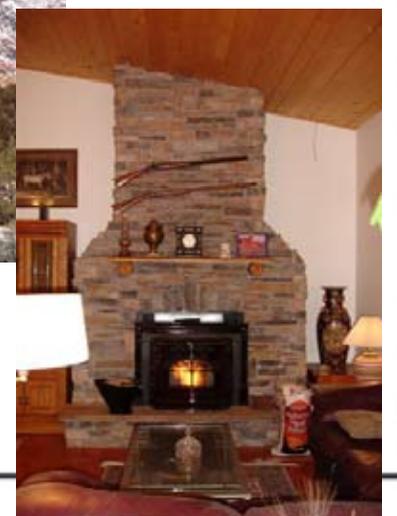
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