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Aho, ("Hello," addressing a man),

Eyonia, ("Hello," addressing a woman), Kage! (Friend!)

in the Umo^oHo^o (or Omaha, meaning "People 'Against the Current'") iye (speech, or language).



Sernade (1996) Margery Coffey

This part of coastal south California, "...encompass(ing) 7,000 square miles that spanned from the beaches of Malibu to Paso Robles, (and) inland to the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley," was and remains Chumash Country. A coastal People renowned for their ocean-going skills, their spiritual hold on this land is still felt, insofar as Point Conception is considered by Native People across the Continent as the "Western Portal," where spirits leave the Land, in-kind to the High Peaks of the Adirondacks in upstate New York, especially Mount Marcy, being the "Eastern Portal," where spirits enter the Land. The *Chumash Painted Cave Historic Park* on the western side of San Marcos Pass preserves an example of the spiritual expression of these "Seashell" People. The Santa Ynez Chumash, amid their small Reservation established in the Valley that bears this name, are contemporary descendents of these "Bead Maker" People, although today's gaming resort near Solvang bears little cultural resemblance to their past.

A half-century is a longtime, and for an All-Decades Reunion for the first Six Classes of Ernest Righetti High School (ERHS) - several sessions now into this collective event, - a few of these Classes are either ahead or behind that magic number "50," but all of us are here, even those who have left the planet, in spirit. As it is said in the community among which i live, "We have come this far, and now it is time for them to take their journey, alone." We remember those who are no longer with us with sadness and warmth, for the memories they gave us of themselves, and of we, to them.

As a Junior Class President and advocate for an Alumni Association that never formed, i regret i cannot come to a 50th anniversary Reunion this particular winter (e.g., "year"), if only for this marker of time. The role that i have in nudging a true "Political Revolution" among a thousand winter's old culture, for which its principle architect has waited nearly 40 winters to occur, is finally happening, and this necessitates my full attention. As with all of you over these many winters, i have engaged several classmates in either correspondence, telephone calls or visits, and have wondered of many more, curious about how we have all grown and changed, accomplished, and "still have things to do on our bucket list." Two of those who have become successful from the Class of '67 alone, one of the country's finest keyboard musicians, and co-founder with the late Lowell George of the veteran rock band "Little Feat," Bill Payne, and Dr. Sharon A. Center, a DVM Diplomate/American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, and Professor of Medicine at Cornell University, who is THE world's expert on feline (cat) cancer, we can all be proud of. Sharon, as some of you undoubtedly know, married her high school sweetheart, Kirk Sapa, who himself has had a very successful career in the non-profit world, and thereby can be looked upon as a "storybook romance." One who is no longer with us, the late Linda Osmundson, was for 26 winters Director of a domestic violence program, Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) of Saint Petersburg, Florida, whose 100 bed Shelter she envisioned is now named after her. i myself can report unabashedly that i have indeed, "cure(d) virginity," and chosen not to aspire becoming a "United States Senator from California," two of the remarks signed in my graduating 1967 yearbook. Nor have i become especially famous or well-known, though i've left a mark in each of the locales where i have resided, a mixed bag of small rural towns and larger cities, and interestingly, varied cultures extraordinarily different from our own.

Perhaps the seminal event for our collective Classes remains the Assassination in 1963, when, for whatever reason i was chosen, as a Freshman mind you, to write the lead story in The Legend about that tragic, unsettling event. "Why?" i asked, with our journalism sponsor allowing the following presumptuous question to be published, "Why did Lee Harvey Oswald kill the President?" That weekend was also my theatric debut in William Archibald's The Innocents, a dark, moody rendering of a Henry James novel that Drama Instructor Annette Gillespie shrewdly chose to *not* cancel any performance. At the cast party late that Saturday evening i was also introduced by my older classmates to "heavy petting." Having come to Righetti from a privileged but troubled family in suburban Los Angeles, a number of Seniors at this time took me under their wing, and accepted my eccentricities as normal, allowing me to eventually integrate into the social cliques of my own Class, - though i was never accepted as "one of them" -which later culminated into leadership roles in Junior Statesmen of America (JSA, now known as "Junior State"), Class Government, and other groups and initiatives.

However controversial this next remark may still be, ERHS was, in fact, established in the early 1960's as a campus to primarily segregate the Latino population of Guadalupe from being integrated with that of the home, downtown campus of Santa Maria High, and as such, my formal introduction to racial discrimination began with attending this school. Being hazed and humiliated as an "outsider" in those early winters, i saw similarities between my own experiences and those who were likewise bullied and abused for their modest economic status, looks, race, ethnicity, religious preferences or disability. Like all of us, this awareness came gradually, and i do not single out our school, as this reality is ubiquitous throughout our culture and indeed, within and among most cultures of any geographic place, climate or time as a conundrum of Humanity, which is the point: acknowledgement is a first step toward dealing with something, and in doing so, avoidance or denial is not an option if we are ever to grasp, address and transcend these matters of unresolved, multi-generational or historic trauma.



Besides JSA my most memorable times at ERHS includes a four winter apprenticeship in our school's choir, most notably under the direction of the late Glenn Montague. As a Facebook page established to sustain his memory relates, "(t)hese amazing choirs...at Righetti High School and Allan Hancock College...(were) able to pull tight beautiful harmonies from even the smallest of groups. He demanded excellence. He nearly always got it." NO choir i have ever heard has been able to replicate that sound. He never allowed a bedrock faith as a Christian Mormon to interfere with his gift in teaching the importance of that sound through the expression of complex, difficult, music, and always emphasized the significance of religious freedom by performing before varied audiences and in unusual venues. Our seasonal gatherings at Rancho Alamo, Camp One to the west of Los(t) Alamos(t), where i lived during my winters at Righetti, hold particularly fond memories i'm sure, for those choir members who attended them.

Academically i was not exceptional by any means, and in retrospect, while believing in public education as one of the great gifts of the United States to the world, our failure as a culture to “Speak Truth to Power” has led to our present ideologically-driven predicament today. There is no reason, for example, why our high school history and civics courses could not include the role of Indigenous Cultures on the United States Constitution, as the U.S. Congress itself acknowledged in 1988, or how the unanimous decision of the John Marshall Supreme Court —John Marshall! of all folk— in Johnson vs. McIntosh (1823) allowed codification into U.S. law of the infamous “Doctrine of Discovery,” a 1493 Papal Bull where the Roman Catholic Church declared the rights of European cultures to subdue the Aborigines of the South and North Americas by force of arms and conquest. Even in 2016, so *many* aspects of Euro-American and world cultures are left out of our K-12 educational curricula, including comprehensive sex education (proving our fear of sexual pleasure and the responsibility that goes with it Trumps the actualities of war) that the lie in what we have become today often exceeds the promise of what we were told, as each generations discovers this and rebels, correctly in principle but often foolishly in practice.

By my last semester at ERHS, the Spring of 1967, i was caught up in the cultural and political changes of that time. As the Seniors had done for me four winters earlier i took a Frosh protégée—a girl from the History Club who later became the club’s President and who happened to be a Mormon (i was literally the first boy to take her out)—on a date to Cal Poly to hear the Jefferson Airplane. i also cut 21 days (i was in love) by forging my step-grandfather’s signature on typewritten excuses and never got caught, but *did* get caught foolishly doing so with the then-JSA faculty sponsor’s signature (Mr. McClean) on a Daily Bulletin form, thereby receiving my eighth “unsatisfactory citizenship” mark in four winters, and was replaced in speaking at graduation but allowed to walk across the stage. During one of those cuts i was on campus at Stanford University when i learned that Dr.



Cartoon by Andy Singer, 2016

King was speaking in 45 minutes at the Memorial Chapel. So i rushed over hoping to make it in time, and climbed the stairs waaaay up to the balcony where, with standing room only, i heard him give his West Coast version of “Beyond Vietnam,” the speech i believe ultimately led to his death. While it took sometime for me to absorb all of what he had said that day, i was already transitioning from the AuH20/Reaganite as brought up to be by my natal family to the man i was to become. Substitute Afghanistan, Iraq or the faux War on Terror for Vietnam, and we have the same military entanglements today, first established through the Permanent War Economy promulgated with bipartisan passage by a U.S. Congress through the National Security Act of 1947.

Since a half-century ago i’ve led a most interesting life of sacrifice and service, and personal growth and transcendence. My five winters in California after graduation led me to see the relationship between geographic place and climate, and how this influences both the settlement of varied plant and animal species as well as the Human Race. My 15 winters in New York City opened up the world, where the mingling of varied peoples and ideas showed me how “Through Diversity, There Is Strength.” And with more than a quarter-century residency on a

Native tribal Reservation, this unique experience gives me an understanding of the centuries through the eyes of a thousand winters-plus old culture, and the recognition that once we journey, our energy (spirit), as i say in my poem, *Neither Jesu nor Peyote*; “...There is no need for/ Middleman Jesus/as the seen and unseen/are interchangeable/and spirit/indestructible....” It jus’ goes off, somewhere. For me, it is obvious that the Creator’s hand is present in everything around us, for “We Are All Related.”



Umo'ho' Wau (Omaha Woman) 2002 Coffey

With these perspectives i retain a wide and varied interest centered on the Humanities and Social Sciences, especially so in that “Art Saves Lives,” while appreciative of the hard sciences, the role of technology, and our ethical and spiritual challenges. i am grateful for having engaged with the world, despite its many setbacks and frustrations, and to truly have made a difference in scores, if not hundreds of those lives. It was fortunate for us all to have been born at a point of time to have experienced the 1960’s—one of the truly great upheavals of freedom for Humanity in the history of our species—and to have lived long enough, 50 winters later, to see its reprise, if however in a different way (and with the stakes much higher) among today’s Millennials. From the people i’ve met, gotten to know and love—including co-founding a local arts group in 1982 in our Chelsea, Manhattan neighborhood with Eve Ensler—yes, THAT Eve Ensler—to those whom i admire and take interest in for who they are, what they’ve done, and what they continue to do or can do in the future, i share in their collective vision premised on the actualities of who we are as a nonviolent primate, and remain a perennial optimist. Even with our capacity to commit individual or collective evil, we can at any time, and often do, chose a different way. Love does indeed, Trump Hate, but not “that woman!”



Having met her at a poetry reading of mine and other poets in New York City, my companion of more than 30 winters, Dr. Margery Coffey—a visual artist and scholar—and i for the last 16 winters have worked alongside Dr. Dennis Hastings (Omaha), a “Nelson Mandela” of his Omaha People, and one of the original Indigenous occupiers of Alcatraz Island (1969-71), where he served on the Council of Seven, the Governing Body of that occupation. Later, the future Dr. Hastings smuggled food—and Angela Davis—into the Aboriginal occupation of Wounded Knee (1973), among numerous other Native occupations. Hastings and i actually met three decades before our present collaboration in the 21st Century, a fact we both realized once he had approached me after several winters of residency on his home Reservation. His organization, the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project (OTHRP), is likely the most successful and dynamic grassroots-based, tribally-derived and directed group in the United States, with nearly 50 major projects, including award-winning books, films and initiatives (including the return of both human remains and sacred objects from Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution, among others); responsible for ground-breaking state and national legislation (including the Congressionally-passed 1990 Native Graves and Repatriation Act, NAGPRA); design of a world-class museum that has yet to be built; *and* providing key passages from a forthcoming book modeled after the late Howard Zinn’s work, that aced the Federal judicial system, culminating in a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision handed down in Nebraska vs. Parker on March 22, 2016, *all with an unfunded tribal mandate*, and accomplished by sheer tenacity, courage and vision.

OTHRP is assisting in this Political Revolution of the Omaha by offering for free to the tribal community, while retaining copyright, three publications, including two bi-lingual (Omaha/English) Comic Books – <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/07/13/coyote-gray-fox-s-m-snake/> - featuring traditional three stories, puzzles and vocabulary builder, <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/07/22/color-coyote-and-the-buffaloes/>, presenting another traditional Omaha story, both 24 pages in length, and a 26 page *Dancing Our Way to Peace*, <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/08/04/color-dancing-the-way-to-peace/>, the last segment of a forthcoming 256 page book, *Umo'ho' Cultural Anthology*. All are examples of the curricula being developed by OTHRPs “Grandfather Remembers Curricula Project.” <http://www.nativevillage.org/Archives/2009%20Archives/NOV%20News/Grandfather%20Remember%20Curriculum%20Proposal.htm> which is drawn from the 1,500 page forthcoming book, *The Completely Illustrated Grandfather Remembers Broken Treaties/Stolen Lands The Omaha Land Theft*, noted earlier as the work that helped ace the Federal court system. Examples of OTHRPs presence in the media include foster child advocacy www.manataka.org/page1849.html the Omaha Tribal Interpretive Center Museum <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/10/11/ambitious-museum-use-past-preserve-omaha-history-and-brighten-its-future-56496> ; and regarding Nebraska vs. Parker <http://www.redlakenationnews.com/story/2016/04/04/news/key-passages-from-forthcoming-book-helps-wins-us-supreme-court-case/45477.html> A Federally-registered, 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural and educational organization, OTHRPs welcomes tax deductible contributions, with checks made out to the “Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project” or “OTHRP,” P.O. Box 279 Rosalie Nebraska 68055 or contact OTHRPs@yahoo.com or check out and “like” OTHRPs own Facebook page or visit the OTHRPs section of www.jackalopearts.org. richard chilton.