

# Inquiring Minds: Life's Lessons Learned

Issue #40 October-?, 2016 "Wisdom is the reward for surviving our own stupidity."— **Brian Rathbone**

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## REVIEWING MY LAST DECADE AND LESSONS LEARNED THEN

In February 2017 Patricia and I will cease being a sexagenarians and enter the ranks of a septuagenarians. This has given me reason to reflect on the last decade and what I have learned in those years.

On June 24, 2006, when we were 60, our daughter Aimée and John Miles were married in Rosario, Mexico. Our families expanded to include each other, and we learned to broaden our horizons.



David, Aimée, Patricia & John

After I injured by back in 2012 and a bit in April of this year, I adopted a workout ethic which put me in better health. The aphorism "Use it or lose it, but don't abuse it" fits.

Soon after I retired in 2004, I started tutoring privately, mostly math to middle school students. Around 2010 I added on volunteer tutoring. Lesson learned: find meaning in being useful benefits the server and the served if both feel they are getting something.

For most of the last 20 years Patricia and I belonged to a non-denominational Spiritual Community, [Companions on the Journey](#) (COJ), made up of Catholic, Buddhist, and New Age beliefs, the zeitgeist of our spiritual smorgasbord culture. Some 5-6 years ago, as often happens in the splinter communities, this one also split into two groups--a very painful divorce of sorts where families and friends parted ways. A few years later, I explored Buddhism. I found it to be a very workable philosophy; but could not find the vibrant community I had at Companions on the Journey. The revised liturgy was too long, ritualistic, and not in agreement with my changing belief system. Fortunately, Patricia understood my discomfort, and gave me the freedom



COJ Men's Retreat

not to attend. She agreed with the Bard's "...to thine own self be true." On February 17, 2010, exactly midway between our birthdays (February 14 and February 21) Lois Ann Miles was born at St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco on Wednesday. This child not only transformed us into parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins; but changed our lives as we grew along with her. She brings out the best in us as we rejoice in her childhood life of innocence and awe. In September of 2013, our son David married Eno, in a small intimate ceremony in Los Angeles, once more expanding our family. In 2014, at the age of 97, after years of home care by loving caretakers, my (our) mother Eleanor died. Mom and dad kept our family close, then and now. Among many things my mom taught us was to be grateful--and we are, for our parents, family, and all our gifts. Last year on September 4, Lois had her dream of having a little brother come true. Tommy joined us on this planet to work his magic on us as we worked ours on him. We now see and admire how much our daughter and son-in-law John work, and remember how much we worked to raise children. They, too, I imagine, now know what we went through. and we share respect. Sadly, three months ago, after three years of marriage, David and his wife separated. We were saddened, will miss Eno and her family, but realized that it may have been the best thing to

do. We accept and wish them both well on their new journeys.

Over the past ten years we have lost many family and friends, each of whom made up a part of us.



Who knows what the next decade will bring. Trying to live it one day at a time realizing how precious life is.

## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CARING, A SLEEPER OF A NEW FILM

The title itself makes the movie sound like a lesson on taking care of the ill or infirmed, a real yawner. Since it rated four stars on Netflix, we thought we'd try it out; and it was really an engaging film dealing with a middle aged man taking care of a quick witted and angry teenage quadriplegic who drives off his would be caretakers with lines like, "Why would a middle-age man like you take a \$9 an hour job to wipe my ---." From that point on both challenge each other to face their own demons, grow, have adventure, and fun getting out of their comfort zones. Issues of fatherhood and abandonment are central to three main characters. Considering the source, the raw language is understandable. Check out [the trailer](#).

## COJ DEATHS BRING HEALING

The expected and unexpected deaths of Kathleen Lyons and Lou Schaefer helped bring healing and forgiveness to our wounded and split spiritual community. At Lou's memorial I saw Lou M. and Fr. Sean, Michael and Paul, Ed and others embrace. Forgiveness, a core tenet of Christianity, was put into practice on that sad and joyous day. Amen to that.

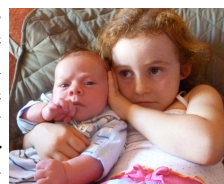
## HELPFUL SAYINGS TO GUIDE ME

°Ya gotta do what ya gotta do. °I cannot force another to change, but can only change myself to accept him or her as he or she chooses to be. °Listen to your body. °Do you want to be right or have a relationship? °Everyone's point of view has a reason for its existence. and °You reap what you sow.

Curious about your guiding mantras. -Joe



The family around mom



Tommy and Lois