



Chronicles of Diversity

20 December 2006 ; Volume 8, Number 39

Chronicles of Diversity Contact Information:

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Trees & lights

Today, a special report from the world's most disaster prone region, the Puget Sound of the State of Washington. Well, actually this is not a special report in the general sense, because this appears at about our regularly scheduled time. However, it does seem special in the sense that it was not on the schedule for any end of the year summary.

For those of you in the hinterlands beyond the good old US of A, the Puget Sound Area has experienced in the last month it's second disaster, catastrophe, stupendous change event, or whatever adjective you might have for these things. Both of these events were weather related, floods and our most recent wind storm. That doesn't count the snow and ice that basically shut down Seattle for about a week. So far there have been no earthquakes, tsunamis, lahars, terrorist attacks, or pandemics, but once the

momentum gets started, only God knows?

So to get us in the proper frame of reference, let us spin that old metaphysical question in the "light" of recent events. "Does a falling tree, turn out the lights, if no one is there to watch it fall?"

Isn't real reality grand, of course the tree does turn out the lights when it falls across power lines. Actually, in my particular case, to be precise, the lights were out for fifty and a half hours. I joined the over a million households that woke up to that reality Friday morning, December 15, 2006. While those numbers have diminished rapidly there will still be some areas that will not have power restored until Christmas. Christmas is December 25th, in the case of some politically correct who might stumble across this posting and have evolved beyond celebrating this winter holiday.



The Colorado Blue Spruce, planted by my landlord's deceased sister was one of the casualties. Sometime after the power went off it hit the top of the neighbor's fake chimney, bounced off to the side, basically taking off his gutters and breaking some of his plastic siding. All it did really was make a big mess, and as a consequence gave me an acceptable view of Lake Washington, Mercer Island, and beyond.

Up the street a big maple came down crushing a corner of the adjacent garage, before coming to rest on the house back porch. Monday morning, when the crew arrived to begin the removal, they were still not sure how they were going to get the tree separated from the structures with the least amount of damage. Now there is a couple of piles of large wood chunks being collected along the street, and they haven't yet got to the main tree.

Pretty close by was the big Douglas fir that fell across the street, shearing about 10 feet off of one utility pole, 15 feet off another, taking the cross arm supports off a couple more, and bending them on the final two. Seward Park Avenue South was blocked just across the street from the Kline Galland nursing home, with about a two feet in diameter uprooted tree trunk. Those primarily Jewish residents were evacuated because their backup power source was just not adequate to provide for this extended utility interruption.

Friday morning I went out to assess the damage to the area. Other than the aforementioned, nothing really serious. A couple of houses had their power lines altered, but really just inconveniences. The interesting part however, from the north end where the road signs said road closed, you could not see the downed light killing tree, from the south however you could see it. On the north as traffic approached the barricade about a third of the cars and SUV's seemed to think that the sign just did not apply to them. They simply drove around the road block, thinking, I assume, that they were some way going to alter reality by their presence, or the presence of their vehicle, or that signs don't apply to them.

When the Seattle City Light power crew finally arrived on the scene Saturday night, an unofficial interview with a member of the over worked power crew said that it was the worst damage he had seen in this particular storm and it might be Sunday evening before we would get power, unless they were able to reroute power to some of the houses down stream from the outage. Thankfully, they were able to do that, and the power came on early Sunday morning at 3:25, but who's counting.

Beginning in January, "The Wonder Springs Chronicle" will begin a personalized series on stupendous change planning and leadership. The current program, officiated by local governments is called 3days3ways.org. It is nice to say that local governments are taking the lead in this, perhaps worldwide, but the 72 hour concept is really just a follow on to a federal 72 hour program, which really has little basis in actual catastrophic reality, except to get people to think about a potential disaster, and not to freak out when real reality hits. Since we do not have to worry about political spin here, the actual planning sequence should be for a week minimum. Should a real pandemic such as Bird Flu hit your area, two months or more is a more realistic idea. Something to ruminate on until we begin our program here in January.

Therefore worldwide, if you need to look at the reality of stupendous change, the Puget Sound area governments and other resources is a place to start your personal, family, and community resource planning. As we stated at the onset of this article, this is the disaster capital of the world, that is the reality of this beautiful place.

Reality, can you deal with it? Your insurance company will call what happened this last week an Act of God. But what part in this did God really play? All three of the trees in the brief survey above should not have been there! I know some of the reasons for the blue spruce, and that is for the most part an unwillingness to look at reality, for a number of good reasons.

The maple tree that crushed the garage, I was told by the arborist and the garage owner that the neighboring tree was reported to the tree owner as a hazard over four years ago, but nothing was done about the tree, until now an Act of God took it down. Is that really an act of God, or some means of

coping with the reality that people are not God, and if we don't face reality, we will never have to deal with serious issues, until death us do part from this life? That removal would have also cost someone money out of their pocket, now God gets the blame, and we all pay for negligence with higher insurance costs.

Then there were two trees that should have been removed, where the one had fallen across the power line. I would consider it an Act of God that one remains, with the possibility to take it out, before it happens again. You know hundred foot tall Douglas Fir trees, really are not that beautiful. Part of the reason that the Puget Sound region is a disaster paradise, is that it is also a tree hugger promised land. The reality is that if you build your house amongst tall trees, chances are that when the wind blows really hard, some of the trees are going to fall down, probably on you or your neighbor's house, or garage, or boat, or car, or maybe even you, or your neighbor, that unlucky chap. Little trees for some reason are just not as spiritually inspiring as a "Pseudotsuga menziesii" five feet from your hot tub.

The reason that most of the Act of God damage occurred is that people were unwilling, or educated into a false sense of security, that bad things will not happen to good people and they are basically a good person.

The illusion of modern America, is that you can be all you want to be and live a prosperous vain life in anyway you choose, and nothing bad will ever happen to you, if you only believe. Reality check! There is a God who created it all. You are not Him. Furthermore, there is a reality out there, beyond your capacity to control. That means in a nutshell, that blew off the nut tree and through the window, that you do not alter that reality with your nutty thoughts. If you think this wonderful life illusion is really reality, you are either self deceived or mentally ill. You are incapable of discerning for yourself the truth, because the true truth does not lie in your being.

Talking with a young man from Kent in the gas line Friday afternoon in Renton, he mentioned that it was amazing that such a little storm could create so much chaos. I went out for

breakfast Saturday morning, at the place I normally go, the parking lot was over flowing. I thought I would try another place. The waitress there, while there was room to sit at the counter, looked like she was about to have a stress heart attack, so after 20 minutes with no service I left.

I think I bought my second ever designer cup of coffee at the Tully's in Fred Meyer, and got a blackberry scone. It was nice to sit and talk to the man raised in Montana and the couple from Renton's Fairwood neighborhood in the store's little café area. They all were amazed just how much chaos, such a truly minor interruption could create. Renton with the power on, had become the hope of humanity and the comforts of civilization for people from southeast Seattle, and the suburban areas of Renton, Kent, and perhaps beyond. I had my heart set on ham and eggs, or perhaps pancakes, but a scone and a grande mocha was just fine. All something definitely beyond my backpacking stove's capacity in a cold house.

Most of my real disaster stuff is in a box in a storage space in Spokane. There was not enough room in my truck to bring it back to Seattle during a trip a year ago, and I haven't had space since either, but I made out quite well for the fifty hours of the wonderful falling tree making me without lights episode. After a couple of trips to Renton I realized, it was much more peaceful at home in the cold, than the hassle of dealing with the chaotic world of people unprepared for reality. A combination of meat, fish, and shrimp gumbo, cooked over a backpacking stove, was probably better than I could get in a restaurant anyway. This backup plan did not have the luxury of my best plan, but at least I was comfortable and had the best lit house in the neighborhood. This without the graces of a generator.

As you listen to the region's well trained disaster planners, you quickly realize, as they continually state, the problem is not really with the stuff that you will need, the problem is with your attitude preceding, during, and after the stupendous change occurs. As I started writing about during Katrina, then broke a bone in my hand, I do not believe in disasters and catastrophes, because nothing happens in this world that is not in God's control, and I know the God who controls the circumstances.

That means I may experience stupendous change and the stress that it may bring about in my life, but not only do I understand my position and responsibility in true reality, I understand I need to stay flexible as change sometimes stupendous change happens in my life. I realize furthermore, many times stupendous change occurs not only through physical events, but through health and other issues also.

This is the Christmas season when lighted trees have been a historic reminder of an evergreen tree, symbolizing the light of the world in a dark time. The reason that Christmas is a sign of the birth of the son of God, being born in human flesh, is that reality has been altered by man's decision to seek the darkness instead of the light. This week we have seen that for the very same reason those evergreen trees can remove the light, and the heat, and the pleasantries of life. We can call this an Act of God, but in reality this darkness is still related to the sinfulness of man and our need for a Savior.

Have a very Merry Christmas and be thankful that you have electric lights this season. Aladdin lights may be fun for a couple of days, but real progress for this country would be for us to look to the Light of the world, instead of the light of our own limited illuminations.

Our 2006 Chronicle Archives are now available for PDF download at www.wondersprings.org. It is our plan to have the whole Chronicles of Diversity Archives stretching back to 1999 in a searchable database by the first of 2007. That task is now complete through 2004. Beginning in January we will be changing the name of Chronicles of Diversity to The Wonder Springs Chronicle posted on the WonderSprings.org dedicated blog server.