

Saturday, October 29, 2005

Who is this Atavist guy anyway?

A lot of my blog entries reference Sieg, the Atavist and you may wonder "who is this guy?". He is not a peer, he's from a different generation than I am. More of a mentor, he gave me my first job in computing back in 1993. His software company was getting near the end of the list in the phone book, and I was cold-calling them all looking for a job (and getting nowhere). He agreed to see me, and had in mind the task of porting his courier company's COBOL applications and data from an old Tandy microcomputer (with 8" floppy drives) to a shiny new 486 running SCO Xenix. Did I know anything about it? Nothing. "Sink or swim" were his parting words to me as he loaded me up with a stack of manuals and sent me on my way.

It was the beginning of a long and fruitful friendship (I hope for both of us). I spent many an afternoon in his office combing through source code, figuring out how stuff was supposed to work and Sieg would teach me about investments, economics and a crazy political theory he subscribed to which turned out to be Libertarianism. It sounded like workable anarchy to me and it made no sense (I was still pretty left-leaning in those days, having been a recent student, and when you're safely nuzzled away in an academic cacoon, you inevitably turn into a raving pinko. I'm probably still further to the left today than most capital L Libertarians if only for the simple fact that I haven't left Canada) Sieg, pictured above at age four, came to Canada from Germany (as did my own mother), but I didn't know about his early life until I read his blog post about it today. The fact that his family spent their first winter in Canada living in a chicken coop in Alberta is a testament to the principles Sieg embodies: self-reliance and personal responsibility. Something we're woefully short of in today's world full of entitlements and reluctance to accept responsibility for one's own actions.

So quote Sieg: I have never felt disadvantaged because of the less than perfect circumstances during some parts of my life. I never wanted anyone to feel sorry for me or to help make things better. I learned that from the example of my parents. They just wanted to be left alone to succeed on their own. That is all I have ever wanted. Don't help. Just get the hell out of my way. Don't give me anything, but don't take from me what isn't yours either.

Amen to that.

This is not to say that people shouldn't help each other, and I don't think Sieg means to say that. I know this because several times over my life, he has come to my aid in one manner or another but I think the key point here was that at the time, I asked for his help.

Self reliance doesn't mean nobody co-operates and you let your fellow man starve to death or drown, but it does mean picking up the cards you are dealt and playing them.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Life, the Universe and Everything at 12:29

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Between Batgirl and a Monkee

Friday night/early saturday AM, around 12:30 EST am I'll be doing a segment about WEHT.net on a special "Where Are They Now?" show on WBZ NewsRadio 1030, which I'm told goes out across 38 states. Word is that I'll be on after Micky Dolenz and before former Batgirl Yvonne Craig. Kinda cool.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Life, the Universe and Everything at 16:58