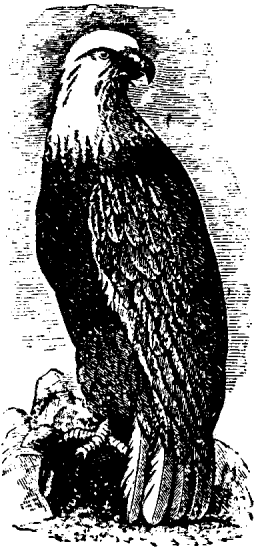


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# Frontiersman

*Facing the truth, however great the cost.*

*September 2010*

## Farewell to Goodbye

Sam Aurelius Milam III

When I was a youngster, we occasionally went on family trips. The members of my mother's family were mostly in Massachusetts but my father had relatives variously scattered around east Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, so we did some travelling in that part of the country. We didn't stay at motels. We travelled between the homes of the various relatives. The length of a day's trip was determined by the distance to the home of the next relative. At night, all of us kids slept on pallets on the floor. The adults slept wherever there was space in a bed. Nobody seemed to regard any of that as being inappropriate.

I recall one overnight stay with a relative in a small town in east Texas. I no longer remember which relative we were visiting. I was bedded down on a pallet on the living room floor with my brother, my sister, and my cousins. I woke up in the middle of the night needing to go to the bathroom. I stood up but I couldn't remember the way to the bathroom. We'd arrived late, after a long and tiring trip, and we'd gone to sleep as soon as the pallets could be arranged. Consequently, I didn't have any memory of the arrangement of the room. Strangely, I can remember it today but, that night, I didn't have a clue. I was completely lost. It was a small town and there weren't any street lights outside. There weren't any night lights in the room. There weren't any lights on any radios or clocks in the room. It must have been a cloudy night because there wasn't even any starlight coming in through the windows. It was as utterly dark as anything that I'd ever experienced up until then. I began groping for the wall, stumbling over sleeping kids as I went. I eventually found a piece of furniture and began groping to my left, looking for a door or a light switch. I couldn't even find the wall. I groped from one piece of furniture to the next for what seemed like a long time but there

wasn't a wall or a door to be found. I must have gone completely around the room. I don't know how I managed to miss the doors. There were three of them but I absolutely could not find a way past what seemed like an impenetrable barrier of furniture. Eventually, I gave up and headed back out into the room. I stumbled over sleeping kids until, eventually, I found a bit of unoccupied pallet that was big enough that I could lay down on it and go back to sleep. Fortunately, my bladder was more resilient back then than it is nowadays. Fortunately, nowadays I have a night light near my bed.

Back then, long distance telephone calls were expensive. They were normally used only for important things like notifying people of emergencies or deaths. If you were taking a trip and you wanted to notify somebody back home that you'd arrived safely at your destination, then the normal procedure was to call home, let the phone ring twice, and then hang up. The person who was waiting at home was expecting the call, which you had arranged before you started your trip. He knew to let the phone ring at least three times before he answered it. If it rang three times, then it was somebody else calling, and he could answer it. If it rang twice and stopped, then he knew that you'd arrived safely. The phone company didn't charge for incomplete calls so the relative whose telephone you were using wouldn't be charged for a long distance call.

Those occasional trips took us to a good many relatives. We might stay for several days at our intended destination but, along the way, our visits were usually overnight. We'd have something to eat when we arrived in the evening and breakfast before we departed the next morning. Because of those visits, we said a lot of goodbyes. There weren't any telephones in cars back then so the departures were very final. When it was time to leave, people stood around the car, talking. Women hugged and maybe cried. Men solemnly shook hands. Recent annoyances or disagreements tended to be forgotten. Stray kids were located, luggage →

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was stowed, and people climbed into the car. When the various farewells were done and the driver backed the car out into the street and drove it away, that was it. The people in the car would wave out the windows and the people who were staying behind would wave back but, once the car was out of sight, the people in it were gone. They might as well have been half way around the world. If somebody in the car had forgotten a shirt or a toy, there wasn't any way to notify him. He'd probably never see that item again. It might be years before any of those people spoke to one another again, if they ever did so. If there was something that somebody had forgotten to say to someone, it was too late to say it. A neglected apology or a forgotten kind word would remain unspoken forever.

If I was among those who remained behind after such a departure, then I'd walk out to the street and watch the car as it receded into the distance. I'd watch the back of it, clinging to the sight of it, until it passed from view around a corner or over a hill. Such departures were profound events for me. I had an instinctive understanding of the potential finality of them. Every such departure filled me with sadness. When I was ten years old, *goodbye* was a powerful word.

As time has passed, I think that I've noticed a change in the way that people feel about departures. I might be wrong. Maybe it's just a trick of memory over the years but this is how it seems to me. It seems easier, now, for people to say goodbye. Departures don't seem to be as important as they were when I was a kid. I think that it's because, nowadays, people are never really out of touch with one another. A departure, even if the traveller intends to go a long distance, isn't a separation. I recently called an old friend who lives in Santa Clara, California. I haven't seen him for about 14 years. I called him after six o'clock so it didn't even cost me anything. He wasn't at home. He was in a bar in Oakland but he answered his phone promptly. I guess that it doesn't really matter where somebody is nowadays. A person who's across the continent is just as accessible as a person who's across the room. Distance has a different meaning now than it had in days gone by. *Goodbye* isn't such an important word anymore.

Old habits die hard. When somebody drives

away, I still have a tendency to stand and watch the car until it's out of sight. A departure still saddens me but not so much as in the past. I know now that, when the car is gone, its occupant isn't really gone. I know that I can snatch the cell phone off of my belt and, in a few seconds, I can be talking to the guy again. Nobody is ever out of reach unless he wants to be. Nowadays a conversation with anybody that I know is right there at my fingertips, just as long as the little battery isn't dead.

I think that people born in recent years might not understand the previous meaning of goodbye. I wonder if the kids in the family today have ever experienced a real departure. Someday, if we ever begin to send space ships to the stars, then departures and goodbyes might again reclaim their former status. They might again have meaning. For now, it appears to me that the importance of the ideas is mostly gone. So, with happiness at the change, I bid a fond farewell to goodbye. So long, goodbye. It was interesting knowing you. For a long time, you meant a lot to me. Maybe you will again some day but, for now, I'm happy that you're gone.

### Inner Peace

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Cassie, of Beaverton, Oregon.

I'm passing this on to you because it definitely works and we could all use a little more calmness in our lives.

By following simple advice heard on the Dr. Phil show, you too can find inner peace.

Dr. Phil proclaimed, "The way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you have started and have never finished."

So, I looked around my house to find all of the things I'd started and hadn't finished. Before leaving the house this morning, I finished a bottle of White Zinfandel, a bottle of Captain Morgan, a package of Oreos, the remainder of my old Zanex prescription, the rest of the cheesecake, some Doritos, half a bottle of vodka, and a box of chocolates.

You have no idea how good I feel right now!!!

Please pass this on to anyone you think might be in need of inner peace. ∞

### Old Timers' Lore

Overheard by Sam Aurelius Milam III

Ancestry — If your parents didn't have any kids, then you won't be able to have any kids, either. ∞

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## Stray Thoughts

Sam Aurelius Milam III

Plenty to Fear — People who advocate crime prevention like to claim that if you don't have anything to hide then you don't have anything to fear when the government agents want to find out things about you. There are at least two things that you have to fear. The first thing, whether or not you have anything to hide, is the government's ever-growing powers of intrusion and control. Worse than that, however, and much more frightening, is this. You have to fear the incredible combination of ignorance, arrogance, and stupidity that causes otherwise normally intelligent people to claim that, if you don't have anything to hide, then you don't have anything to fear when the government agents want to find out things about you. Those nitwits are even more frightening and more dangerous than the government agents.

Consequences — Expressed sexual desires are preferable to repressed sexual desires.

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## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sam

Hello there Sam! As a proud and faithful reader of your newsletter for many years I was truly impressed by this month's *Frontiersman*! Your essay called, "Fantasy Factories" is on target! A documentary should be based on facts and actual, and factual footage that has not been tainted! And I mean that! Because a history that is built on lies will only lead to more lies! But I cracked up when you say that, "According to Leonard Graves narration: was to finish sinking the ship with the deck cannon! However, the order to prepare to surface wasn't a part of the narration! Because the order to prepare to surface was done in English!!! The footage you say in your newsletter was German and it was a German submarine! Now I know that the Germans were not the only ones who spread propaganda in war time, and to say that there was a camera crew watching the whole incident makes it less credible! They should apologize! But I am glad that you started to watch documentaries more critically and yes! AFV is a documentary! Mistakes happen and they're funny! But once again I would like to say thank you for a job well done on this month's newsletter....

—Marcos, of Ione, California

Jurisdiction — When the Europeans began their conquest of this continent, one of the things that they did upon arrival, as soon as they could arrange it after stepping out of their various boats was to plant national flags on the soil. When Neil Armstrong arrived on the moon, one of the things that he did as soon as he could arrange it after stepping out of the Lunar Module was to plant a national flag on the moon. The act of planting the flag was a declaration of territorial jurisdiction. That's what a flag means — jurisdiction. By planting the flag, Neil Armstrong claimed the moon as U.S. territory. Space might be international but the moon is a territorial possession.

Grow Up — Virginity isn't a virtue. It's a condition. People are born that way. They're also born helpless, demanding, impatient, selfish, and prone to temper tantrums. All of those various conditions, virginity among them, should be corrected at the earliest appropriate opportunity. It's a part of becoming an adult. 🦋

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## Improbabilities

Sam Aurelius Milam III

When air flows along a surface, the force that's exerted on the surface is less than would be exerted by air that's at rest relative to the surface. I've demonstrated the phenomenon for myself by aiming an electric fan along one side of a hanging tarp. The tarp moves toward the stream of air, not away from the stream of air. It doesn't make any sense at all.

If air moving along a surface exerts less force on the surface than is exerted by still air, then why doesn't a car moving along a road exert less weight (force) on the road than is exerted by a car that's sitting still? I've been assured that, in either case, the entire weight of the car is exerted on the road. It just doesn't make any sense at all.

How can such an outrageously improbable contraption as a helicopter actually fly? If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, then I wouldn't believe it.

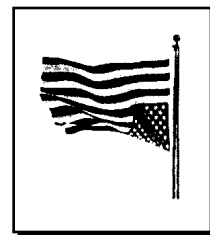
I can't imagine how a little cone-shaped piece of paper in an audio speaker can reproduce, simultaneously, all of the separate and distinct sounds of all of the musical instruments in an orchestra.

It is, indeed, a strange and mysterious universe, filled with wonders. 🦋

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Nation in Distress

No man's life, liberty, or property is safe  
while the legislature is in session.

—Mark Twain (1866)

### Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: SantaClara Bob;  
Lady Jan the Voluptuous; my mother; Dewey  
and Betty; Sir Donald the Elusive; and Eric, of  
Ione, California. —editor

### Court Quotes

From *Humor in the Court* and *More Humor in the Court*,  
by Mary Louise Gilman, editor of the *National Shorthand Re-*  
*porter*. Forwarded by Don G.

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated? ∞

### Funny Questions and Answers

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho  
Falls, Idaho

Q: Why are Jewish men circumcised?

A: Because Jewish women won't touch any-  
thing unless it is 20% off. ∞

### Puns

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho  
Falls, Idaho

- A successful diet is the triumph of mind over platter.
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- A gossip is someone with a great sense of rumor.
- When you dream in color, it's a pigment of your imagination.
- Condoms should be used on every conceivable occasion.
- Reading while sunbathing makes you well-red.
- When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I. ∞

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requires me to provide ID to receive it. In case anybody's  
curious, I also accept gold, silver, platinum, etc.

—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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