

(2023 August 6) Rittenberry: Metaphysical Outlaw

107° here again yesterday in a string of record-breaking days under the Heat Dome. And of course, much worse elsewhere. Yet, I find while talking to friends — all of whom, as you would expect, are environmentally aware and politically left-liberal or left (and by the way, are in much higher income brackets than this old low-income Social Security hippie) that few have taken the obvious steps of converting to solar energy or replacing their outmoded heating-&-cooling systems with heat pumps, or even replacing their water-guzzling lawns with xericulture landscaping.

Why not? Mostly the same old reasons: it's not cost-efficient or my change would be insignificant unless the big guys change too. Instead, most (like most Americans and, as far as I can tell, most middle-class people everywhere), while complaining about the heat and watching the evidence of climate collapse mount up around the world, seem to be either waiting for some vague change in the business-government complex to do something extraordinary to fix things, or are just settling into their personal handbasket as it slides into the slough of despond (or is that a ring of hell reserved for those who only stand and wait and despair).

This old hippie certainly understands the sense of personal insignificance while looking at the gross unrelenting malignancy of the corporate warlords in their megadeath scorched-earth slathering after more money and power. And I certainly feel far from hopeful that anything can or will be done, to effectively avert the catastrophe already underway and gaining speed as it comes.

But to do nothing? To not do what can be done in our own backyards, to not take steps in the right direction in our own homes, brighten the corner we've been backed into? To not take advantage of the tax cuts and other options for home solarization, weatherization, heat pump installation, etc.? To not see that the issue is no longer just financial but existential, a question of being able in the midst of the wreck and dreck that we did the right thing. That I don't understand.

"It is the duty of everyman, so far as his ability allows, to detect and expose delusion and error."

Thomas Paine

Michael Gregory

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