

# I WILL HONOUR CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART AND TRY TO KEEP IT ALL THE YEAR.

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 1843

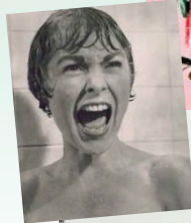
AS WE HONOUR CHRISTMAS 2025 IN OUR HEARTS, WE THINK FONDLY OF FRIENDS LIKE YOU AND THE PERSONALITY TRAITS YOU POSSESS THAT QUALIFY YOU TO RECEIVE THE 33RD ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE INGLIS NEWSLETTER. BUT ENOUGH ABOUT YOU.

## 2025 WTF???

Since Jan. 20, the daily gut-punch headlines reporting spectacular cruelty, corruption and lawlessness make me

wonder if I'm hallucinating. No matter if you stay away from the news, it's back in your face again.

To simmer down, I think back to 1992 when nine other lucky graduate students and I took [Barbara Jordan's](#) policy seminar at the LBJ school. Surely we can trust the professor that that simple, eloquent 18th-century document is strong enough to hold up. We discussed the pendulum swing of politics for perspective. *Whew.* We discussed her *strong faith* that the goodness of the American people will prevail. Surely she can't have misjudged us.



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

At this writing, Ian is in Big Bend for his annual December week-long, camping trip with a buddy. I mean, they sleep and do *everything* on the desert floor.

In other news, after a 30-year hiatus, Ian has taken up rock-climbing again, only this time in a gym. *The show-off!*

John is coaching Andrew's baseball team (like Ian coached John's.) That Andrew is a real [slugger](#). Good season! Also, [Andrew spent time in bike parks](#).

After 22 years downtown, by February we'll be moved into the independent living section of Austin's [Westminster](#), the centrally located retirement community. NO MORE COOKING! **HALLELUJAH!**



Not exactly glamping



## TRAVELS WITH WALTER



During pre-Mardi Gras in February, we headed for [The Big Easy](#) for a week staying in a campground next to the French Quarter with our fabulous former high school and RV buddies Sandra and CA Martin.

Man, strolling through the quarter with friends, beignets and coffee at [Café du Monde](#), escargot and Sazeracs at Arnaud's, oysters on the half shell at Felix's, dancing with strangers in the streets at night to that [NOLA music](#) — YESSSAAAAAA!



Continued on page 2



The Martins' son-in-law got us front-row seats at Preservation Hall on Valentine's Day to hear the charismatic, 3-time Grammy-nominated trumpeter and vocalist Aurélien Barnes and his 7-piece band — including Bruce Brackman on clarinet (shown.) Hearing them perform Louis Armstrong's hits like "What a Wonderful World" in that venue — YESSSAAAAAA!



PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
SAN JUAN ISLAND  
MAY AND JUNE

For our **spring trip**, after New Mexico and Arizona, we drove up

Highway 1 through California, Oregon and Washington.

Joshua Tree National Park was nice, except that we almost roasted alive. (Nice planning.) *Tip: Don't go there in May.* But it was good seeing and hiking around the giant rocks again, seeing those inimitable Joshua trees and the Coachella Valley with the San Andreas Fault running through it.

When we drove into Sequoia National Park, we encountered about a trillion happy people. *Tip: Don't hit the sequoias on Memorial Day weekend.* (Nice planning.) We quickly gave that up

and went to the less-crowded Kings Canyon National Park, which was an absolutely fabulous, well put-together park. Those redwoods with their cinnamon-colored bark were just unbelievable.

Driving down from the Sierra Nevadas, you could see the famous Central Valley's citrus orchards. Heading north along Highway 1, you're on the coastline of the Pacific Ocean

seeing its majestic cliffs, big waves crashing over giant rocks on easy-to-walk-on beaches, windswept conifers and so many rivers and creeks flowing into the blue, blue Pacific.

After Port Townsend and its *functioning* lighthouse, wow, just a short ferry ride to Friday Harbor on the San Juan Island, Wash. We did a lot of hiking and sharing of meals during that week. Friday Harbor — so peaceful, so beautiful, best trails; Claudia sure knows how to pick 'em! YESSSAAAAAA!

We'd always visited Claudia in the fall, but this time we thought we'd go in June. Mistake. Way too hot. *Tip: Don't visit the Pacific Northwest until the fall.*

Next stop: Missoula, Mont. to visit Ian's wonderful sister, her hubby and daughter. Missoula is as close to a perfect town as you can get.

Missoula aside, imagine Ian's surprise here when the converter (charges the batteries) went out.

We stayed at "Jim and Mary's RV Park," but it should have been named "Long Live Lillian Vernon RV Park." The many gorgeous flower

gardens in the park were outdone by so many cutesy decorations that it would gag Lillian Vernon herself.

I mean, while camping, who wouldn't want to see a crazed bird? Or upside-down yard tools spookily stuck in a paint palette? *Breaking news!* It was awarded the 2025 Best of Montana by the discerning readers of *Distinctly Montana*.

On to Grand Teton National Park.

Imagine Ian's surprise to learn on the first cold night that the Alde hydronic heating system didn't work. Nice that we could balance

roasting alive in Joshua Tree with freezing to death in the Tetons.

It was downright emotional to stand at the same spot where Ansel Adams took his famous photo "Tetons and the Snake River" in 1942.







### Petroglyphs in Bluff, UT

Next stop: Utah. Its red sandstone mesas, formations and high cliffs are *breath-taking*, no matter how many times you've seen them.

Ian would be thrilled to camp year-round. I, on the other hand, believe you can have too much of a good thing. At the end of this trip, I announced **"NO MORE TRIPS LONGER THAN 4 WEEKS!!"** No comment from Ian.



TENNESSEE SORGHUM MILL  
KENTUCKY HORSE PARK  
TEXAS CANYONS  
NOVEMBER



During this 4-week (yea!) **fall trip** it's our first trip to see leaves changing. But they're just now changing in Austin!

From our campground in Louisiana, we crossed the bridge into Natchez, Miss., where we strolled through its historic neighborhoods of old Victorian homes. Sitting on a bench on the banks of the great Mississippi, tissues handy, we watched (on a phone) Paul Robeson sing both versions of "Old Man River."

For the next 5 days, it was cold and rainy through Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. Poor Ian got soaked every time he

unhooked and hooked up the trailer. Guess what you can do in a 5-foot-square trailer when it rains. *Nothing!!* (except play gin rummy)

The absolute highlight of the trip for Ian was, a visit to the Muddy Pond Sorghum Mill in Tennessee on his 75th birthday. [His mom, RIP, is from Tennessee, so he grew up worshipping sorghum.] For Ian, this place was a mechanical *paradise*! He LOVED watching the whole process — after a big machine squeezes the juice from the sorghum cane, a wood- and coal-fired steam locomotive boiler makes the steam for boiling the juice down to syrup. Brilliant.

Next stop: the Kentucky Horse Park, the highlight of the trip for me. I got to see my favorite champion from last year, Western Dreamer. This year



we paid more attention to the many majestic and masterful life-size bronze sculptures of champions with plaques telling their stories.

Remember Man o' War? His famous groom, Will Harbut, said this about him: "He's got everything a hoss ought to have, and he's got it where a hoss ought to have it. He's the mostest hoss that ever drew breath." YESSSAAAAA!



After Arkansas and Oklahoma, we got to Texas. With zero ambient light in Canadian, the sunset looked like a giant wildfire.

At Caprock Canyons State Park, we met Sandra and CA again. A bazillion bison and prairie dogs with their cute antics own this park. Huge bison roam everywhere and anywhere they want. At one point, a group of 12 of them paraded through our campsite.

Next stop: Palo Duro State Park and lots of hiking. Like Caprock, its red-rock/sandstone mesas, hills and canyons were spectacular. Sandra and CA are advanced birders, so we spent good time at the park's bird blind. They already knew all the many birds that gathered there!



WILLIAM & TIME  
MANAGEMENT



After Ian and William worked on a puzzle for at least an hour, they stood up and looked silently down at the floor beholding the stupid puzzle. After a pregnant pause, William

announced loudly, "Well. *That* was a big waste of time!"

Indeed, why would William waste his time on a puzzle when he could be doing this?







## BURTON'S HOSPITAL REVIEW

Burton, 80 feet up,  
taking down a tree  
3 days after hospital  
discharge.

In August, Burton suffered a gash to his left leg from a dirty shovel. Soon cellulitis set in, which promptly migrated to a major staph infection in his knee. He spent two weeks in Dallas's famed (think JFK) Parkland Hospital.

**Burton:** "I mean, this place is the worst spa ever! Sometimes they come and stick me with needles and just leave! I haven't seen a single Reiki practitioner on staff. Nothing smells like lavender. I haven't seen a cucumber since I've been here. And I don't even think it's real acupuncture!"

"I'm sure 98 percent of the nurses have nothing to do. While waiting around, you know, maybe they could all fit in my room and sing happy birthday or something. It's the thought that counts! Going that extra mile with care really makes the difference ... to me. I'm beginning to think this whole place might be a scam."



Talula, Burton & Bernie



Please!!



Ian's favorite mountains in Big Bend: the Sierra del Carmen de Madera, located across the Rio Grande in Mexico



Here's wishing  
YOU A 2026 PACKED WITH  
laughter and joy,  
ADVENTURE, gratitude,  
GIVING, good health  
and lots of applause.  
YESSAAAAA!



love,  
the Ingليس

800 W 5th St., Apt 805 | Austin, TX 78703  
toni@inglisopinion.com | ian@ianinglis.com