



EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET

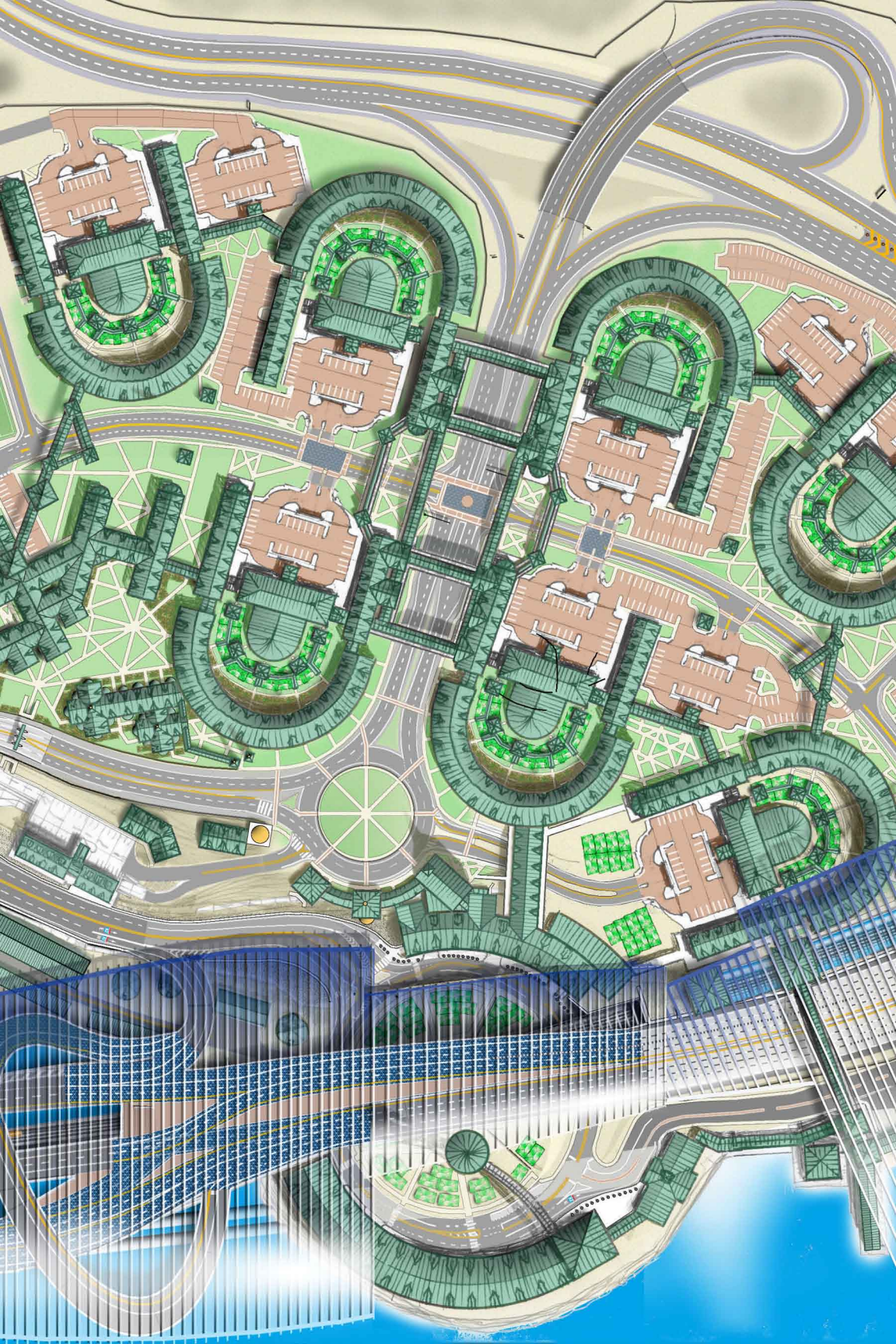


PONTIFUS

THE BRIDGE BUILDER'S TALE IN THREE PARTS

DINNER STOP AT THE END OF THE WORLD
ZIMMERMAN'S FOLLY
LITTLE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD





Pontifus, the Bridge Builder's Tale

By Bob Kirchman

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I *think over again my small adventures.*

M*y Fears,*

T*hose small ones that seemed so big,*

F*or all the vital things I had to get and to reach,*

A*nd yet there is only one great thing,*

T*he only thing,*

T*o live to see the great day that dawns,*

A*nd the light that fills the world."*

--Old Inuit Song

Rupert Zimmerman was uncomfortable, to say the least, with the moniker. Perhaps his most trusted assistant and daughter, Elizabeth had struck a nerve. She and her husband Martin were the only ones in on it anyway, but it was an effective device when the old man held the reins too tightly in the conduct of a meeting. To be fair, she used it only on rare occasions and it must be noted that Elizabeth Zimmerman O'Malley was indeed a compassionate and thoughtful daughter. The old man, like so many who struggle hard before their great work bears fruit, tended to grip things too tightly. The Latin term was actually an apt description of Zimmerman, for it was '*Pontifus*,' which simply means; "Bridge Builder." The more used, and more familiar usage of the term refers in no uncertain terms to the

Bishop of Rome. Thus a double entendre became a useful tool to the younger Zimmerman. She used it softly and sparingly as a means to help her Father step back into the humility he himself felt more comfortable in.

Mankind has always sought to open up a way to points unreachable. First he wore paths to new hunting places. Gradually the paths became highways as trade ensued. Fords and ferries connected the paths across streams and rivers. The building of bridges stretched both the limits of human creativity and the materials employed. Simple logs and planks were laid across streams. Masons crafted stone arches that bridged rivers. Steel beams and cable were spun in the most amazing forms to bridge the largest bodies of water. John A. Roebling's Brooklyn Bridge, completed in 1883, came to symbolize the high art of bridge building. High gothic towers supported an elegant array of cables and stays that gracefully carried the roadway and a pedestrian promenade across the great East River. Throughout the centuries that followed, longer spans connected ever greater distances. But there were a few challenges that remained in the realm of imagination. They remained there, mostly because of geopolitical constraints, but psychological barriers as well. In fact, it was the consensus that something was "*impossible*" that often stood in the way of the attempt. Rupert Zimmerman would tell you that his earlier projects, far less ambitious than his latest, had almost all defied insurmountable odds. Yet they had been built! Driven to what many considered the end of the world by forces beyond his control, he found a way to go further.

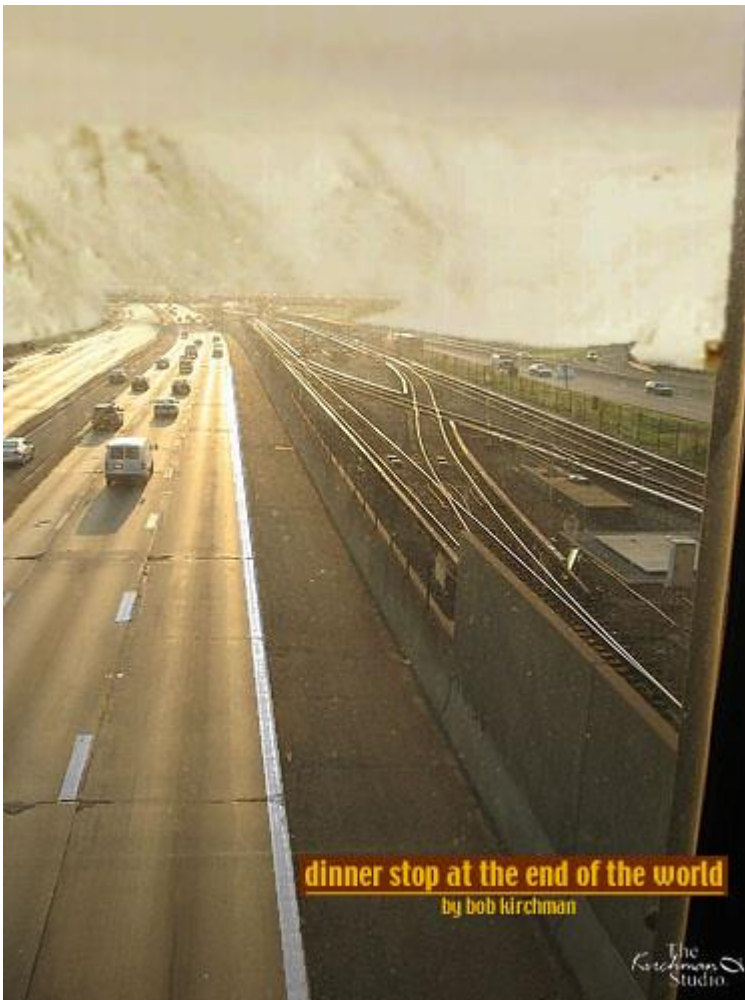
Dedication:

This little book is dedicated to those brave young people, who though I shall not name them here, will likely recognize bits of themselves in the characters I portray. I apologize beforehand for this intrusion into your privacy but feel that the world so desperately needs your story. Your very real dedication and bravery inspired this book and it cannot be written without a foundation of such truth. Most of all it is dedicated to my beautiful wife, of whom the accolade: "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*" is most fitting. You have stood by me in good times and bad. We have shared in the raising of some incredible young people who inhabited our own home. You have poured your love and wonder into the lives of countless students. I love you with all my being!!!

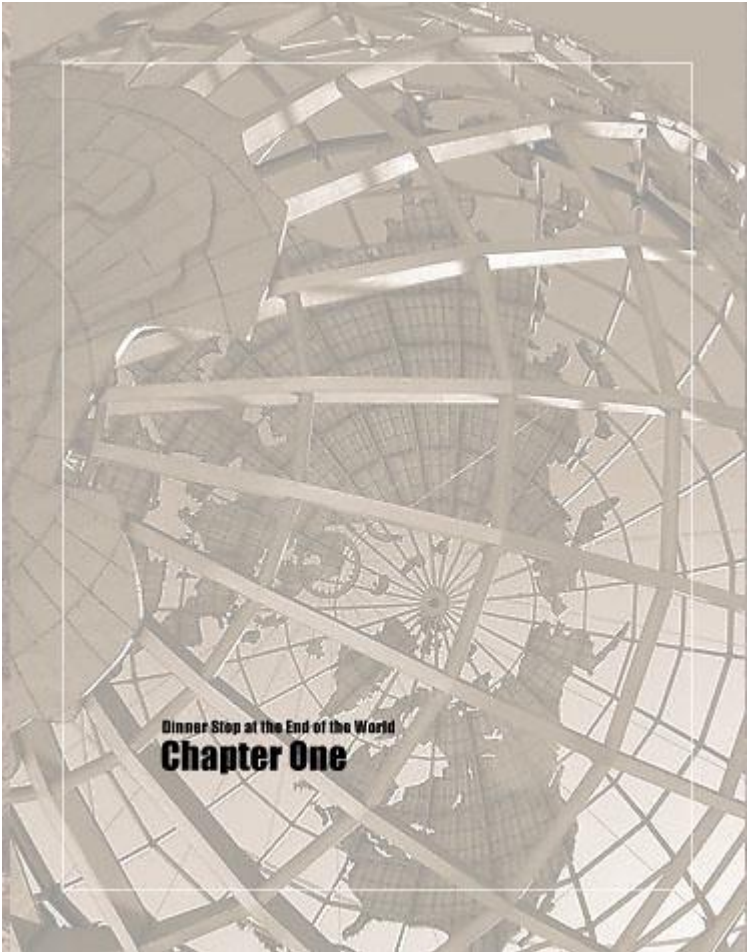
It is because we both love young people so that I write this. It is but a poor attempt to offer hope and direction to a world so devoid of it. We err, perhaps, in pointing to the hope of the hereafter without providing adequate models and renderings of that Kingdom and those who have labored to bring it into the world we inhabit now. The water that will quench the soul's thirst is dismissed because those who profess to bear it often seem, (to the society around them,) preoccupied with apocalyptic visions and derision for the world as it is now. It is not

wrong to love such things, but they are not easily shared with those for whom the flower of life is yet to come. No bride-to-be, having just unwrapped her wedding planner, wants to engage in a lengthy discourse on Eschatology!

Jeremiah of old told those in exile to "*Build, Plant, Marry and Have Children, Prosper and Pray!*" -- and to be sure, there are many who do. They just don't make the headlines very often. The historical references in this work, and there are probably too many, are essential to understanding how men and women have navigated dangerous times before. They are most necessary to show how one can indeed have vision for one's own times and hope in a greater, unseen reality as well.



Book One: Dinner Stop at the End of the World



O *H, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!" - Rudyard Kipling*

The morning sun played upon the flowery tundra of Cape Mountain and Kingigin, the high bluff above Wales Alaska. An arctic fox surveyed the scene as the light played vividly on the

Bering Strait. For the years of the Cold War, Soviet and U.S. submarines stalked each other silently beneath the icy waters while fighter jets challenged one another in the airspace above. The Soviets operated a radar station on Big Diomedes Island in the strait. The U.S. Air Force surveyed the scene from an outpost near Wales. Next to the village itself, the U.S. Navy operated a submarine research facility. The hostile environment seemed an appropriate stage for a face-off between the world's two superpowers.

Captain James Cook named it Cape Prince of Wales in 1778. The Inuit knew it as Kingigin, or 'the high bluff,' and called themselves Kingikmiut, 'people of the high place.' Their ancestors walked into America, it is said, on a bridge of land that once connected Asia to Alaska. Now the icy strait separates the two continents, and as the sun rises on the tip of Alaska, it illuminates tomorrow dawning across the International Date Line. Sunlight gleams upon two thin lines of commerce stretched across the vast strait. The twin spans of the Bering Strait Bridge, completed in 2020, once again connect Asia solidly to America. As morning breaks over the vast landscape, the first trucks begin to roll across the slender spans, carrying the commerce of the world.

Joe fumed inwardly as his rig made its way up the mountainside approaching Wales. He and Chris were in the queue for tonight's hazmat session. The young Turk was hauling fertilizer to Siberia from Canada and had missed last night's hazmat hours. Chris and Joe had helped him change a tire that had blown on the merciless road and now he was one of their company. Protocol set him at the front of the convoy, since he was a holdover from last night's roster. Chris, as a senior driver, fell in behind. Joe brought up the rear. "Slow hazmat night," Chris radioed, "I'm squarely in the 'rocking chair.'" Joe mumbled: "I hope Abdul does OK with the 'Twenty Questions.'" He referred to the likely interrogation the man from 'Marlboro Country' faced at the hands of the BSBS personnel who worked security for the span because he'd drawn the hand of hauling a hazmat load. Abdul seemed likeable enough, and had told them about how Turkish customs officials loved to receive cartons of a certain American cigarette in exchange for speedier processing at the border. Still, the retired Israeli Defense Forces personnel contracted to run security on the twin span would likely take some time to get to know him themselves.

Summertime brought a joyful display of color to the arctic hillside. Joe hoped sometime he'd have the opportunity to walk on that landscape, but tonight he just hoped for a rest stop that would time itself so he could SKYPE his granddaughter. 'Kate' as she now proclaimed herself, was in high school now. The child he had had the leisure to watch grow up was quite a wonder now. She would talk about her latest creative endeavor or her latest soccer match with such passion that it seemed to wash the old man with the fountain of youth. These were the men who moved the Bering Strait freight. Younger men stayed for a time, but grew restless. Patient older men and women, for whom time probably moved quicker, made up the

bulk of BSB drivers. Most of them seemed to have left their careers in the 'lower 48' prematurely. Castoffs of a struggling economy, they had come to the end of the world to finish their working life making salaries that would make executives jealous. The hours were long, the roads often dangerous, but you had plenty of time to think.

Joe's mind wandered to Willa, a slender brunette with the spirit of a willow tree. She was

the love of Joe's life, but life itself had lost much of its flavor in the past few years. Joe had married her in a time when optimism was plentiful and the future had seemed far brighter. He had struggled as a small businessman but their home had been happy. When America seemed to have lost its pioneer spirit and slumped into its economic doldrums, their life together had become tense. Their children had found their own paths in life and Joe found odd jobs to work at, often living in a cheap motel with his colleagues as he worked as a technician in some faraway city. His 'take home pay' often barely covered the health insurance. United States President Barry Soetoro had promised 'free' benefits for all but had only succeeded in making things more expensive. The housing industry, in which Joe had worked, was in shambles. Joe longed to go to Alaska, where opportunity seemed to still reside. Willa resisted. In the end an advertisement for "men willing to endure long hours, dangerous conditions and enjoy huge paychecks" was more than he could resist. A company called Intercontinental Logistics was looking for what they called "Mature Drivers" for the Bering Strait Highway. There was a signing bonus and they trained you. Willa had been devastated, to say the least, when Joe announced that he was headed for the land of the midnight sun. Her dream of happy family dashed by hard economics, she composed herself and tried to win her husband's heart to stay with her in the 'lower 48.' The money didn't matter that much to her. If ever there was a woman who supported her man in crisis, it would have to be Willa. "You are so much more than your career!" she opined. "Look at the lives you have touched..." Indeed their home had been a place where many had flourished in Willa's nurturing love. Joe ached for her sweet presence now, as she did for his! Still, in the end, his faithfulness in sending most of his paycheck to her was a better option than eating up their limited resources. She wished for a simple happy life with friends in their small Virginia community... but the harsh reality was that most of her soul-mates were alone too... their husbands were off working in Alaska!

In the 1950's the Eisenhower Interstate and Defense Highway System was initially planned

to include Alaska roads. The designations A1, A2, A3 and A4 were given to Alaska highways and a road was even proposed from Fairbanks to Nome. That road was not built until Rupert Zimmerman needed it and the Interstate designations remained unsigned as traffic, mostly INTRASTATE, did not warrant the necessary upgrades. Now the Alaska Republic was busily widening these arteries and posting Interstate shields to signify their new importance. The opening of the Bering Strait Bridge had ushered in a new age of INTERCONTINENTAL highways. [1.] Like the transcontinental railroads of old, they required men. Good men and lots of them were required to turn the wheels of commerce.

All Trucks Must Enter Scanner" blared an electric sign ahead. Joe and Chris knew the drill.

Maintaining a 25 mph speed through the scanner, then a mandatory sampling of the low-temperature liquid adhesive in their tankers, a few questions from the BSBS agents and then they'd be "in the corridor." They would be escorted through the cleared Bering Strait Bridge during the wee hours of the morning. They would be allowed a stop for refreshment at one of the service plazas on the Diomed Islands, but other than that they must keep on moving. The unknown card in their hand tonight was the addition of the Turk to their group. If he was sent to the impound lot, Joe and Chris would roll on. but a delay and further checking could put the whole convoy in a later window. As far as the money, you won some and you lost some, but as they approached Thursday morning, a well timed call would catch Kate at home on Wednesday afternoon. That was Joe's plan anyway. Dinner, he told Chris, should be on one of the Diomedes.



*Maintenance operations on the Bering Strait Bridge.
Graphic by Bob Kirchner*

Chris, Joe knew, would want to hold out for Big Diomedes, on the Russian side of the

International Dateline in the Siberian Autonomous Republic. He smiled thinking of the likely reason. Her name was Kris. She was one of the hostesses at the Big Diomedes Travel Plaza and the two drivers enjoyed her spunk. Chris noticed her name tag at the moment she read the name on his shirt, beginning an ongoing conversation. Her green eyes seemed familiar with worlds unseen. Joe suspected she was writing a novel behind that hostess stand. Probably something full of wizards and worlds with more than one sun. It was the kind of thing he loved to listen to in the cab on audio books. Joe had known Chris from his younger days.

They had found each other again on the Bering Strait Highway. Joe driven by the throws of economy and a failing business, Chris from his restless soul. Chris had retreated from the vibrant faith that had characterized his younger life. A series of disappointments in life had driven him to question his questions. He'd studied theology for a time, but now avoided discussion of things unseen... except that Joe noted, an exceptional individual could, it seemed, 'see' that dimension so well that even Chris would let down his guard. Someone like Kris seemed capable of painting a picture of that realm in vivid colors. Joe, who's faith seemed to sustain him longed for Chris to know something of the same peace. It would, Joe mused, require an exceptional guide.

Chris' softening at the thought of such an encounter, however brief, was encouraging.

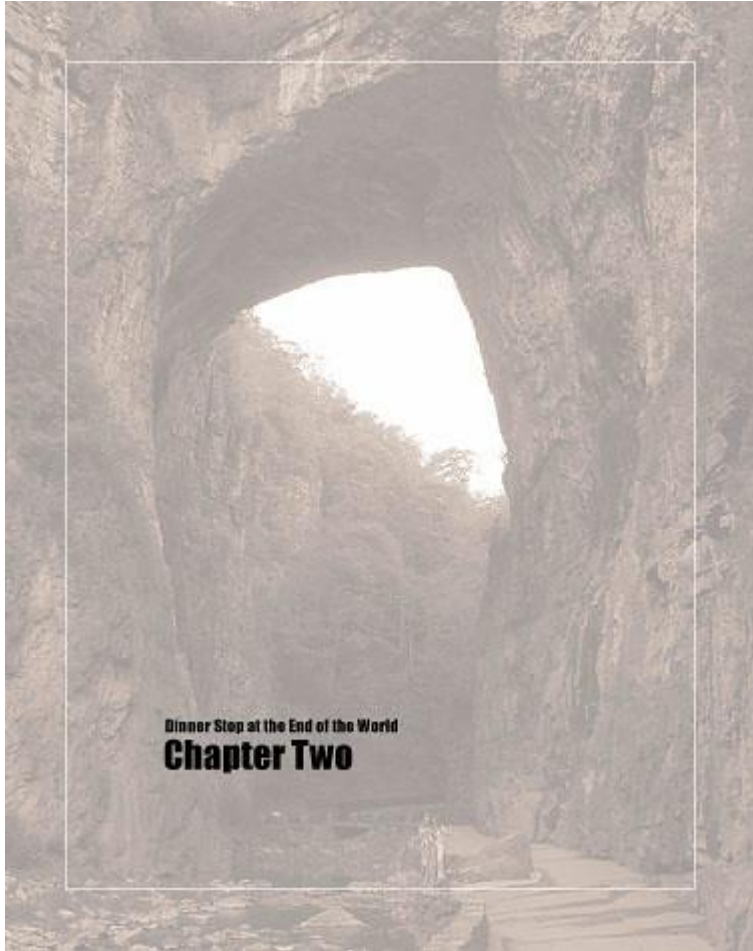
Though the senior driver never allowed such conversations to become personal, he did seem to be allowing them with greater regularity. "Didn't C. S. Lewis once say something to the effect that if you could imagine something wonderful, it was very likely that there existed the possibility for its fulfillment, or something like that?" Indeed, here was a conundrum. If one limited oneself to considering the seen world, there were many unfulfilled dreams... many labors lost... much observed futility! But, on the other hand, if there was more to life than life itself, dreams could be fulfilled in worlds now unknown. Healing and restoration might just be the substance of such places. The junior driver was betting his life on it. The senior driver might just see the possibilities.



Map of Alaska's new intercontinental highway.
Graphic by Bob Kirchman



The Intercontinental Logistics Liquid Transporters driven by Chris and Joe.



L*et no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" -- 1 Timothy 4:12*

A*ll who have meditated on the art of governing mankind are convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth" -- Aristotle*

People always thought Kris was taller than her true height. When she stood next to her

husband they assumed he must be seven feet tall. In actuality he was a little over six. Her fair skin and delicate features fooled you too. Under her girly exterior was a woman fit to "meet my mountains." Many of the strong people who had built the Texas Republic in the Nineteenth Century had come from Rockbridge County in Virginia. Sam Houston, "Big Foot" Wallace and a host of other heroes were raised in the rolling valley of Virginia. Kris grew up in their footsteps. She probably never thought she'd leave those gentle hills, but when Rupert Zimmerman sought a spiritual mentor for his Eden, he looked to a church with a history of sending ministers into frontier communities.

Walt Disney once set out to build an idealized version of the Nineteenth Century

American town. He built "Main Street" in the center of Disneyland. Notably absent was any church. A 'cast' of characters portrayed a longed for Americana. Tourists paid good money to stroll in its ambiance, then returned home to face their own harsh realities. Such a world was only possible when portrayed by costumed characters funded by high priced tickets. Zimmerman might have simply been seeking a sober and diligent population for his empire, but he at least saw the hole in Disney's thinking. The service plaza was, without doubt, the center of Big Diomedes's economic life. The little church in the biosphere was the heart of her life. Many considered Kris the reason. Her given name, Kristina Elaine, seemed to define her best. Meaning "Follower of Christ" and "Light," it defined precisely who she placed her identity in as well as her mission.

Zimmerman had funded Big Diomedes's Pastorate well, but Kris was drawn to reach out to

those in the pulse of her economy. A number of women who'd come to Big Diomedes with the intention of circumventing Zimmerman's 'codes of conduct' now found themselves singing in the choir as a result of Kris' intentional friendship. Now they in turn were reaching out to newcomers with the same intentionality. The Westward push of the American frontier had come at a high cost for the women who followed their restless men. Loneliness and madness were not the stuff of Luis L'Amour novels, but they were the grim reality faced by many a pioneer wife. Kris made it a point to build bridges between souls, bringing together the families of Big Diomedes in a circle, to protect them from the wild ravages of a lonely frontier. During the long Winters, she made sure the little community was not overcome by the surrounding darkness.

Summer brought families in minivans looking to drive over the end of the world. They'd

often linger in Big Diomedes's biosphere. The children would wander into Kris' open-air Summer Bible Schools, were she had created whole undersea worlds on painters' drop-cloths. Smiling belugas and orcas cavorted on fields of deep blue as Kris explained nature's wonders to "little pitchers with big ears." The biosphere's incarnation as a tourist destination was an afterthought, but the nature lessons seemed to be a well purposed institution. Parents would linger on the fringe of the group, finding the discussion far more informative and entertaining

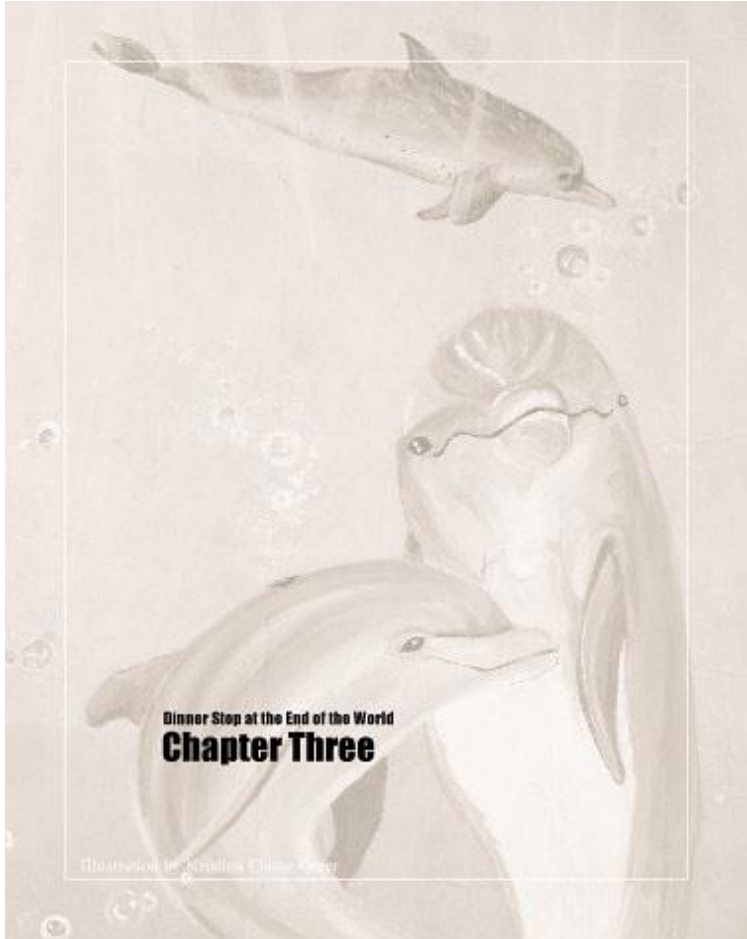
than the Park Service's "Ranger Talks," which always seemed to be a repackaging of the "Looming New Ice Age." Kris knew her stuff. A colleague had once dubbed her the "Critter Consultant" because of her knowledge and interest in the ways of nature. Kris had made sure butterflies and hummingbirds were introduced to the biosphere as a condition of her moving there.

Tourists and truckers alike stopped on Big Diomedes for much-needed physical

refreshment. They lingered there for something else. Disney's Main Street facades were fake. The upper stories were actually scaled down so that they "looked" like three and four story buildings. They were actually much shorter. On Big Diomedes the buildings were small and honest, the creation of a Swedish designer for whom form followed function, but something about the community made it seem larger than it was. There was no architectural trickery involved. When your children practically drop their little electronic games to run into a world of true color and wonder, no hyperbole is necessary.



Painting by Kristina Elaine Greer.



They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." -- Psalm 92:14

The spirit of man is more important than mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation more than its wealth." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

Most innovations like the Transcontinental Railroad and the Bering Strait Bridge spread a blight across the landscape they traversed. In the 1890's, "Hell on Wheels" came to be the term used to describe the loosely formed "towns" that blighted the building of the great

railroads. Rupert Zimmerman would have none of that on his Bering Strait Bridge. He was not so great a moralist as much as one who realized the toll lawless frontier society exacted from its victims. Knowing that the vilest of human or devilish institutions rush in to fill such a void, Zimmerman had sought to proactively fill it. His biosphere city on Big Diomedes was the prototype. Kris had followed her husband to the end of the world to co-pastor the church there. Zimmerman had financed the whole community, including the church. He had seen the folly of making profit at the expense of human suffering, indeed HE had profited at the expense of others. As he learned of the evils of human trafficking and modern day slavery, he had become something of a 21st Century John Newton, loathing his former life and seeking an antidote. He couldn't control the follies of man but he could provide a healthy environment, at least along the tolled portion of the Bering Strait Bridge Highway.

The biosphere enclosed a garden-like eden for her citizens. Kris had had a hand in

designing the parsonage, one of the first hand-built houses in any part of the Bering Strait Complex. It was something wrought out of that beautiful classicism that characterized American cities before the Great Depression and the World War. Zimmerman, who'd shamelessly utilized prefabricated structures, even revitalizing a ship interior manufacturing plant in Virginia for his larger buildings, seemed to sense the toll such industrialism took on the human soul. Here on Big Diomedes he sought to find and hopefully plant something far more enduring than even his great bridge. Seeking the company of men like Dan Cathy and David Green, who saw their companies as a means to more than a profit, Zimmerman sought expression for his own altruistic purpose in the marvel he had wrought. His Great-Great Grandfather had made his fortune building Chicken Coops. Once a necessity for shipping poultry, they were now seen only as 'Americana' decor in restaurants. His Father had worked in the shop before it closed down and he had passed one story, that of being mentored by Cliff Aylor, a man who taught him how to save the odd pieces of belt lacing and relace drive belts utilizing every last piece. Grandpa was a hard man when it came to wasting nothing. But the words of Cliff's that had become inspiration were these: "Your Grandfather loaned me the money for my first house."

Loaned me the money for my first house." Clearly there was a profit one could derive from

business that could not be tallied on a balance sheet. Zimmerman ached to see something bigger than himself emerge from his endeavors. The more he tried to deny it, the more it seemed clear as a bell that his great bridge was not a work of Zimmerman, but of an unseen hand that moved human history. Human history was not an endless cycle, but a line. There was intelligence and purpose drawing that line. Just like the line Zimmerman had drawn across Alaska and Siberia, it led to a destination. Kris' first house was hand-built, but not on site. Her dream design had been cut and fabricated in a production center in Virginia by craftsmen under the supervision of an innovative Swede. The man was an old friend of Zimmerman's and cast in the mold of his Grandfather. Walls and framework were expertly fitted by master craftsmen in Kris' Mother state, packed tightly in a trailer and assembled carefully by those same craftsmen in the wilds of Big Diomedes. Zimmerman loved the thought of following in his Great-Great Grandfather's legacy. The gratitude in the young

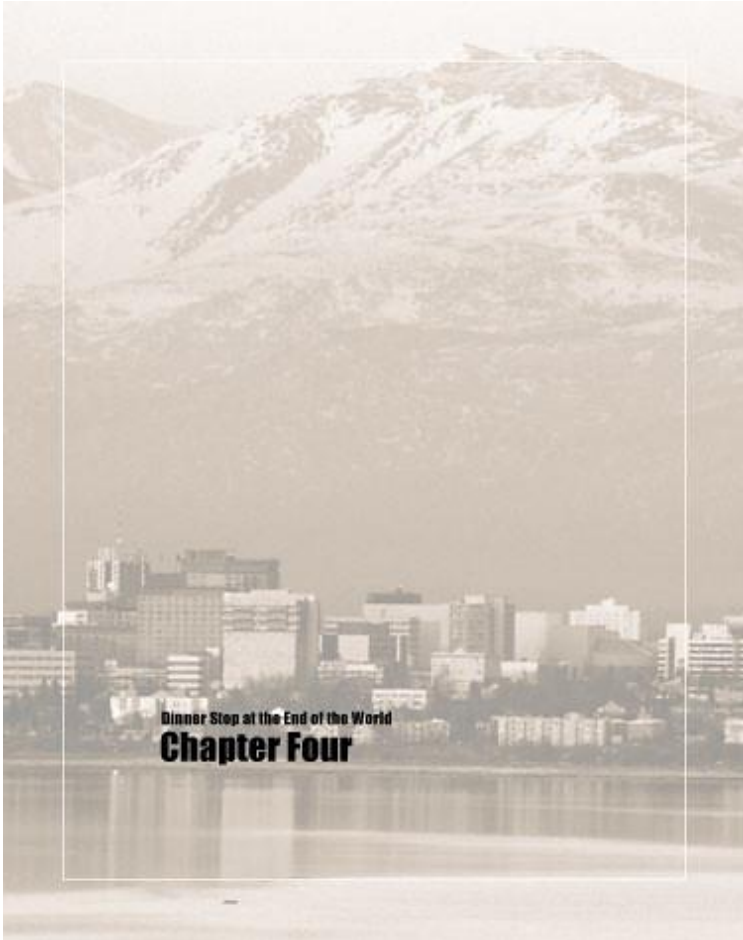
couple's eyes was the bonus Zimmerman hoped for, even knowing that their gratitude was directed to an unseen hand.

[\(to be continued\)](#) [click to read]



Kris' house on Big Diomedes. Graphic by Bob Kirchman

BOOK TITLE HERE



We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." -- Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr.

What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a price upon its goods, and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated." -- Thomas Payne

Like the Transcontinental Railroad of old, the Bering Strait Bridge was forged out of the ashes of a time of great Chaos. Alaska was now an autonomous republic, much like Texas in the Nineteenth Century. When United States President Barry Soetoro brokered an unprecedented third term, he then attempted to defund the bulk of the American military. Here he made a fatal miscalculation. The man who had no stomach for extended conflict, who often went to bed when he should have gone to the situation room, forgot that the men and women in his command had no such misgivings. All it took was a handful of generals who quietly slipped to Alaska with the codes for the missiles and Soetoro was their hostage.

Taking a lesson from America's bloody Civil War, the generals were quick to offer terms of peace tailor-made for Soetoro's constitution. Alaska would become an autonomous state and provide basic security along with the United States Armed Forces. The rift that had long existed in the so-called 'United States' was now official. Soetoro's 'Blue Party' had promised citizens scores of benefits, all to be provided by the government. When the bill came in, there was no longer a thriving economy to pay for it. Gradually Soetoro's regime had to limit what they could give away. An economy in shambles looked to men and women who seemed to come from another era. Those men and women would carve a new nation out of a wilderness.

A brief time of conflict did ensue. Soetoro loyalists commandeered some landing craft.

Coming ashore at night, they sacked and burned Juneau before moving on to attack Anchorage, hoping to isolate and destroy the pipeline terminal at Valdez. General Palin created the ruse of a man unable to direct his troops, drawing the Soetoro forces ashore with the appearance of poor defenses, he hammered them from the hills surrounding Anchorage. Although Anchorage burned, the economic lifeline of Valdez remained unscathed.

The loyalists blew up every bridge and communication tower they could. They soon came to the realization that in destroying Juneau, they had failed to destroy the Alaskan government. Under the red crosses on tents outside Fairbanks, deep inside Alaska, the business of the young republic went on. Cell towers might have been taken out but ragged children ran to and fro with important communications. The President of the young republic shared a tent with war wounded and took a turn at tending for their needs. Citizen-soldiers bolstered the ranks of American troops who had followed the renegade Generals. They were ragged and often had to provide their own supplies and ammunition. In the end they proved to be a "well organized militia."

The defense of the important port of Valdez was their shining moment. As Juneau and

Anchorage smoldered in ruins, Soetoro loyalists tried to circumvent the naval vessels protecting the oil terminal. In their overconfidence they tried to move inland to destroy Alaska's economic lifeline. They were met by the ragged men who had been all too easy to rout earlier... now in the mountains where the same ragged men prevailed. German general Rommel had traveled to Virginia to study Thomas Jackson's Valley Campaign before he became known as the 'Desert Fox.' Alaska's General Palin was, if anything, a more thorough student of Jackson. Alaska might have provided a more limited infrastructure for troop movement than Nineteenth Century Virginia, but her mountains held way more secret passages.

In the American Civil War, Thomas Jackson had enjoyed excellent communications using signal posts such as Massanutten Mountain in the great Valley of Virginia to relay his important messages. Alaska presented a vast array of “signal knobs” for a military engineer with the abilities of Martin O'Malley, Palin's chief strategist. Yupik Inuit specialists joined the effort, communicating in their native language at times. Soetoro's forces couldn't crack the code. Palin always was aware of their positions. By the time they realized it was a Native American language, the war was over. The defenders of the Alaska Republic dug in for a long fight, remembering the lessons of the Civil War, but the Soetoro forces had no great generals and Soetoro himself had little taste for war, especially war that could not be quickly won. His unmanned drones were ineffective in the North, where men who honed their marksmanship hunting polar bear were quick to pick them off. After the tide turned at Anchorage, peace was negotiated.

At the battle of Anchorage Rupert Zimmerman, who was no soldier but a strong defender of his land and family, was wounded. This requiring the amputation of his right leg. Recuperating in exile in Nome, he began sketching his great bridge. A new republic, resource rich but lacking connection to the rest of the world, was waiting for him. General Palin's chief engineer, Martin O'Malley, was also in Nome. The dashing young Captain took a liking to Zimmerman's daughter Elizabeth. Elizabeth had left her native Virginia to be at her father's side. Elizabeth was a gifted artist and a visionary in her own right. An interesting charrette ensued as Zimmerman's great bridge came to life before their eyes.

Zimmerman found in Martin a man of the stature of Claudius Crozet, Napoleon's engineer who came to Virginia in disgrace after planning the Battle of Waterloo. Crozet had built railroads and canals. He built the Blue Ridge Tunnel through the mountains with an army of 2000 Irishmen. O'Malley, the descendent of railroad builders, joked that he'd require three times as many Frenchmen to accomplish his task. Martin and Rupert set to work to create drawings and raise capital. With solid commitments in place, the men made a trip to Wales to survey the stage upon which they would begin their magnum opus.

Although they almost lost their lives when their tent burned on the tundra above Wales,

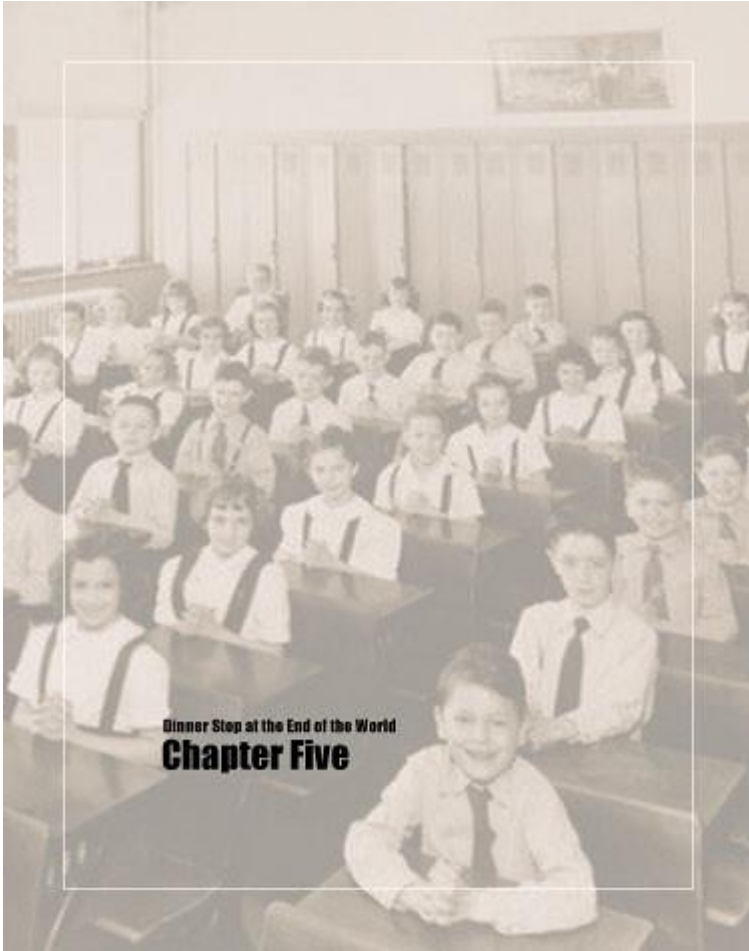
Rupert and Martin survived to begin their great work. Returning to Wales sick and disoriented, the men recovered rapidly as they began assembling resources to build the Bering Strait Bridge. The genius of Zimmerman and O'Malley was in convincing their backers that they really didn't have any genius. What they were building was nothing that hadn't been done before. They referenced the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-tunnel built in the nineteen-sixties in Virginia. That span was 26 miles long and connecting Alaska to Siberia simply required two spans of similar length joined end to end at the Diomed Islands. What they left out of their narrative was the relative difficulty of what they were proposing. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge-tunnel was essentially built on pilings driven into the sandy floor of the Chesapeake Bay. The Bering Strait was infinitely more complex, a wild undersea topography that was complicated by plate tectonics.

Seven men had died building the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-tunnel. Assembling a bridge

exposed to the whims of severe weather had its risks. Zimmerman came up with the idea of a tethered pontoon bridge prefabricated in sections in the relative safety of shipyards. Seagoing tugs would maneuver the pieces of Rupert's game into place and robotic submersibles would place the cable stays to keep it in place. Another problem of the Bay Bridge-tunnel was exposure to the elements of travelers on the bridge. A truck had once crashed into the Bay after apparently being struck by lightning! Wind sometimes wreaked havoc on large trailers. Bering Strait Bridge traffic would move in covered roadways. Assembly in shipyards created an economy that allowed for such upgrades.

The only elements of Zimmerman's plan that had to be fabricated on-site were the high

suspended portions to allow for the passage of large ships. O'Malley designed two -- one in each long span, feeling that would be more than adequate. At the last minute the Russians threw a wrench in the process, demanding another high crossing on their side of the Date Line in the span between the Diomedes. O'Malley worked out a design change but stretched the construction budget over the limit in doing so. Zimmerman was furious. His investors were becoming uneasy. In the end he gave the Russians the shortest suspension span possible.



Posterity, you will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it" -- John Quincy Adams

Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will" -- George Bernard Shaw

Elizabeth Zimmerman O'Malley was the youngest of Rupert and Pat's three children. The

older two had been more like Pat. Rupert loved them dearly, but blessed them as they chose different paths from his. His oldest daughter Anna was a gifted teacher. Anna's children were the delight of Zimmerman's life. He loved to converse with them. Sandy, his middle child, was a noted travel writer and photographer. Elizabeth was her father's little shadow. If Rupert sketched a design, Elizabeth had to try to draw it better. Zimmerman quit his job working for another super ego when Elizabeth was young and for a time worked out of a home office where Elizabeth sat at a little desk next to her father's big table. Zimmerman came from an era when design required drawing by hand. He'd often add texture with crosshatching or stipple with a pencil.

Once a client of Zimmerman's came into the shop as little Elizabeth was hammering away at her paper with a pencil. "What are you drawing, Elizabeth?" She had asked. "I'm drawing STIPPLE!" was the little girl's reply. As a girl she copied her father, but as a young woman she excelled him. Being Rupert Zimmerman's assistant was not for the faint-hearted. He'd been through dozens of them by the time Elizabeth arrived in Nome. Zimmerman trusted his nascent ideas to scarcely anyone. Indeed, his own wife Pat wondered at the rabbit trails of her husband's mind. Elizabeth was strangely comfortable there.

As a boy, the creative and uber-sensitive Zimmerman had been taught by nuns. One of their favorite pastimes it seemed was to slip up on little boys doodling in class and rap them on the knuckles with a ruler. Use the wrong size pencil and they'd break it over your hand. There was a place behind Rupert's peripheral vision where if a person entered he would freeze in whatever he was doing, a holdover from those days... unless it happened to be Elizabeth. When he became known for his successes, young people would want to come and learn by watching Zimmerman work. Often one would try to get closer and look over his shoulder. Rupert would freeze in his tracks... then say tersely: "only Elizabeth is to stand there."

As a boy Zimmerman drew picture after picture of amazing things he wished to build.

Cities on the Moon... space stations... outposts in faraway wastelands all flowed from the boy's hand. After a teacher had unceremoniously ripped up one of his drawings, Zimmerman hid his work under his bed. He grew up to work making other people's dreams into reality but somehow he never forgot his own. Where Zimmerman was strong on hard line, his daughter was strong on form and color. Together they were masters of the narrative that would become the Bering Strait Bridge. When potential investors saw their work, they were reassured by the depth of it.

Rupert, Elizabeth and Martin plugged on. Together they brought a great work to fruition.

As Barry Soetoro's policies mired the economy of a great nation, some like Pat started quietly storing food and silver, preparing for the worst. Some, like Zimmerman, looked to history as they planned for the future. Most thought them a bit crazy though. Post-war Alaska, however, needed a great work to hold on to. They were grateful to Zimmerman for providing it.

The opening of the Bering Strait Bridge and the creation of the Siberian Autonomous

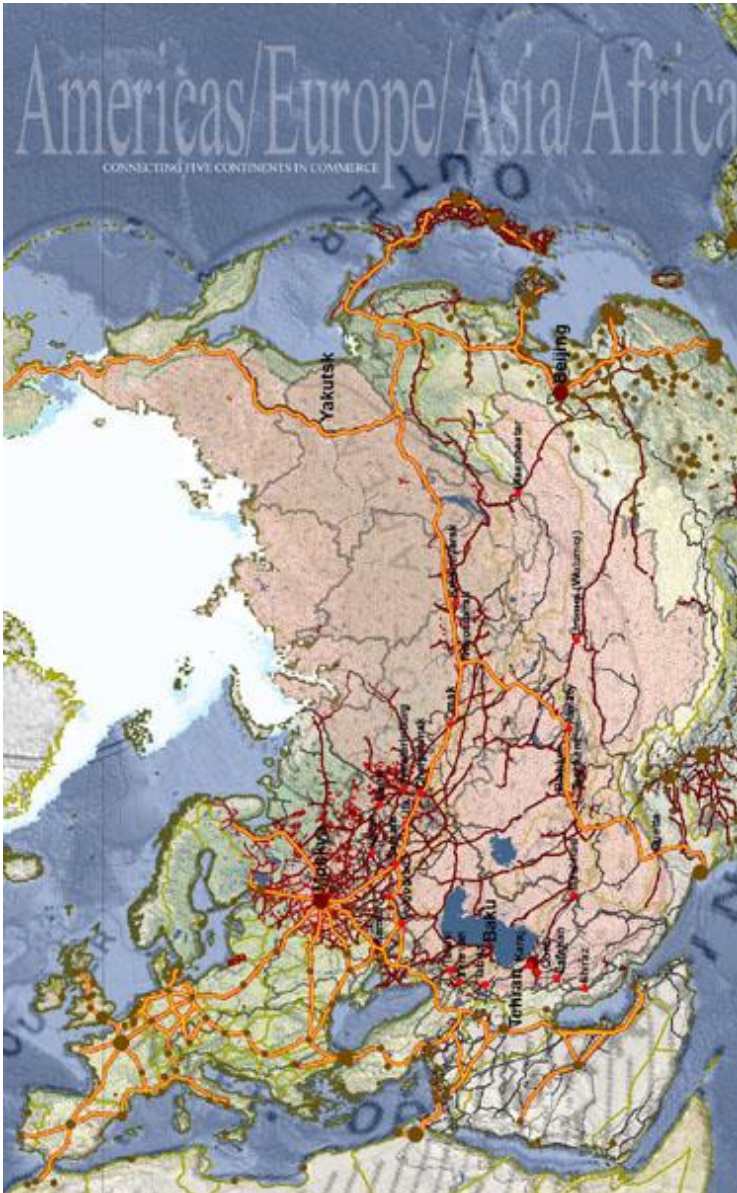
Republic opened up a great new frontier. The Confederation of the two Autonomous Republics possessed more potential energy resources than Saudi Arabia. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a huge stretch of nothing, suddenly blossomed with new exploration rigs drilling for oil. The funny thing is that the rigs themselves were almost unnoticeable and the wildlife flourished. Zimmerman's fortunes grew with the region and now Elizabeth was able to invest the Zimmerman fortune improving lives around the world.

Where her father saw the potential to build, Elizabeth saw the potential to invest in

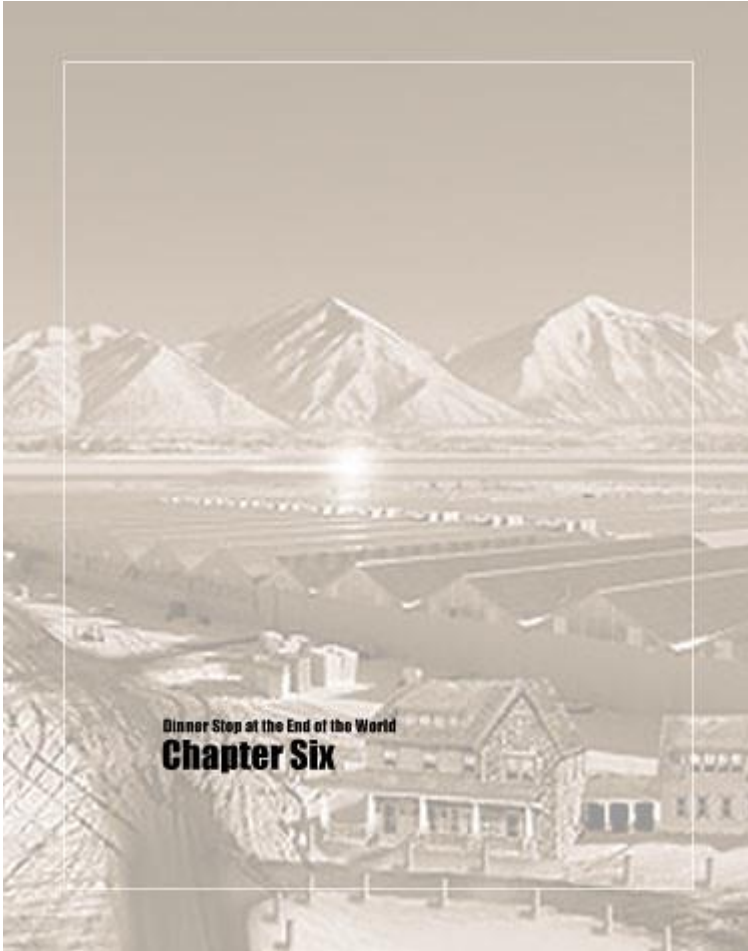
people's lives. In her mind there was no point in constructing a great bridge if people had no ability to produce crops or goods to ship across it. She was saddened that so many people in the lower 48 were living on government handouts and no longer producing things. What she saw in the rest of the world broke her heart.



The Big Diomedea Service Plaza.



Map of Connecting Highways. Graphic by Bob Kirchman



Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old, Behold I do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" -- Isaiah 43:18-19

For the Support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." -- American Declaration of Independence, attributed to Thomas Jefferson

As Joe and Chris had pushed on through the Yukon Territory on A2, they had seen the glimmer of reflected sunlight from Elizabeth's latest initiative... tundra greenhouses. The soil of the tundra had long been known to be extremely fertile but since it was frozen most of the year all that grew there was low scrubby vegetation. Martin pointed out that there was an abundance of geothermal energy in the same vicinity as the fertile tundra. All you had to do was drill for it. With an abundance of oil and gas companies flocking to the region, you simply paid them to sink your wells as a 'side job.' Hot water and steam gushing from deep in the Earth powered turbines to generate electricity, extending the growing season with artificial sunlight. Next it was used to heat the greenhouses and warm the topsoil so it could be cultivated. Finally the cooled water was used to irrigate crops, sinking back into the tundra so the process could be repeated.

Environmental 'protectors' in the lower 48 cried 'foul,' but their own data actually proved you could turn most of Siberia and the Northwest Territories into farms without making a dent in the Earth's temperature balance. The change was not without precedent. In the late Nineteenth Century the American West had been transformed into the breadbasket of the world. Immigrants fleeing famine joined with adventure seekers and restless pioneers to build this new world. Disney's Main Street was but a faint allusion to the energy of these communities as they had faced the frontier with little else than determination and faith. Faith, in the end, was the nutrient that kept them strong. Rupert's shipbuilding friends were happy to fabricate greenhouses fit to withstand the snow loads as his great bridge and the support buildings necessary for it were nearing completion. His Swedish friend followed in the path of Sears Roebuck in providing fine houses for the pioneers. On Martin O'Malley's drawing boards were plans for a new world to take shape in the Twenty-first Century. A world wracked by war and famine eagerly awaited it.

Elizabeth's vision would bring people presently crammed into refugee camps to work the soil inside her greenhouses. The Bering Strait highways would become a conduit for them to feed their homelands. All this would require the participation of thousands of souls who would plant, cultivate, harvest, drive trucks and provide necessary services for those involved in these activities. Coptic Egyptians, now living free of persecution, populated one of the first villages. Their rich Orthodox Church seemed right at home among the vestiges of Russian America. Sumatran Muslims who had made their fortunes working away from home on cruise ships now were able to make a living with their families intact in their own little community.

Elizabeth followed the example of Nineteenth Century America in broadcasting the little groups in such a way that they would need to cooperate with other communities while they

enjoyed the familiarity of their own. Perhaps this sharing in taming hostile wilderness is one of the Divine's greatest gifts to mankind in that they learn to work together. Joe and Chris had stopped to help Abdul change a tire earlier in the day. Men of two different cultures, they were brought together by a common struggle -- the struggle for survival on that hostile road. Chris had never spent time with a Turk before, but Joe remembered when his Grandfather, a NASA engineer in the 1960's had worked with a man from Ankarah named Ali. Ali was the son of Turkish immigrants and was a fellow engineer. Joe's Grandmother had learned what foods to avoid serving as the men shared each other's homes in hospitality.

NASA, in their infinite wisdom, had decided to send Joe's Grandfather and Ali as consultants to the European Space Program. They arrived in Paris during the height of Algerian separation. As tanks rolled through the streets, Joe's Grandfather walked those streets with a man who many mistook for an Algerian! They were very relieved when they moved on to Rome and then to London for the remainder of their work. Abdul was new to the Bering Strait Highway and he was not having a good time of it. He should not have drawn the card of a hazmat load so early in his career, but as all drivers know, these things happen. In addition to increased scrutiny at checkpoints, he had faced mechanical issues with his truck and was woefully behind schedule. Now he'd sat on the side of the road with a blown tire, missing his scheduled insertion into the hazardous materials hours the night before.

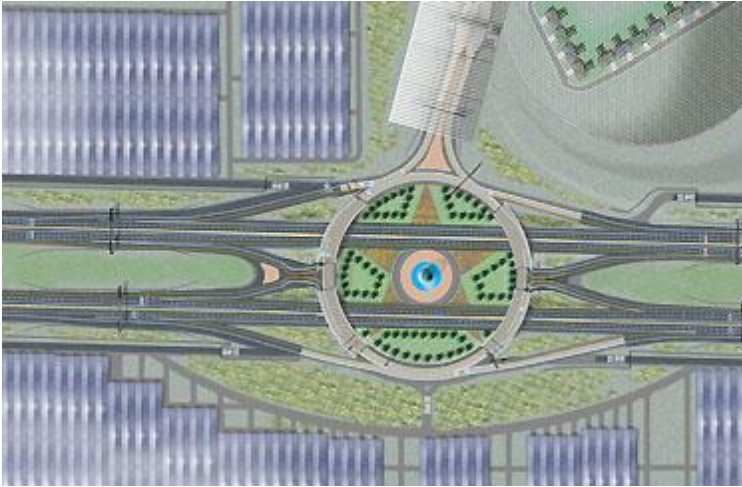
Avery gracious and hospitable man in his own culture, Abdul was nonetheless impressed by the two American's genuine concern for him. Joe seemed to have put aside his own schedule in his mind as the three men wrestled with the unruly rubber. In fact, the Americans seemed to come from a gracious state of mind that he could relate to. How unlike the television 'cowboy' Americans he had been taught to detest these men were. What lay inside a man like Joe, who in his sixties wielded a tire tool like a twenty year old? He wore the ravages of age and a hard life, yet his eyes were merry with a youthful twinkle. Surely it couldn't be his religion. These crazy Americans had THREE Gods, not one, and they did not submit to the disciplines necessary for a holy life! Indeed, many of Abdul's interactions with European Americans seemed to bear out his prejudices against them. On a few occasions he'd met men like Joe, and they shattered all his theories.

Was it a drug, like the pills most drivers took to stay awake on the endless highways?

Surely Joe would acknowledge the harsh reality of life, yet he seemed to live with one foot in another world. Whatever pill Joe was taking, Abdul secretly wanted it. The more Abdul learned about Americans, the more befuddled he became. He was driving for a company that was a competitor to Intercontinental Logistics, who Chris and Joe drove for, yet the two men seemed eager to be his friend. Chris was a deep well of information on how to survive the Bering Highway. He knew what to say (and what NOT to say) at the security checkpoints. He knew that straight-up bribery would land you in the impound lot, but that when they seemed

immovable in their inquisition, certain verbal postures and 'friendly gestures' would speed you along. Indeed, the two men seemed genuinely interested in Abdul's success! He'd read of American companies in what seemed like an all-out war for customer base. Then a fire destroys one of them. Where he had been taught to see the judgement of the Almighty, something else took place. The surviving competitor actually made space in his own building for the displaced workers and the competitor he so fiercely had battled with just weeks before.

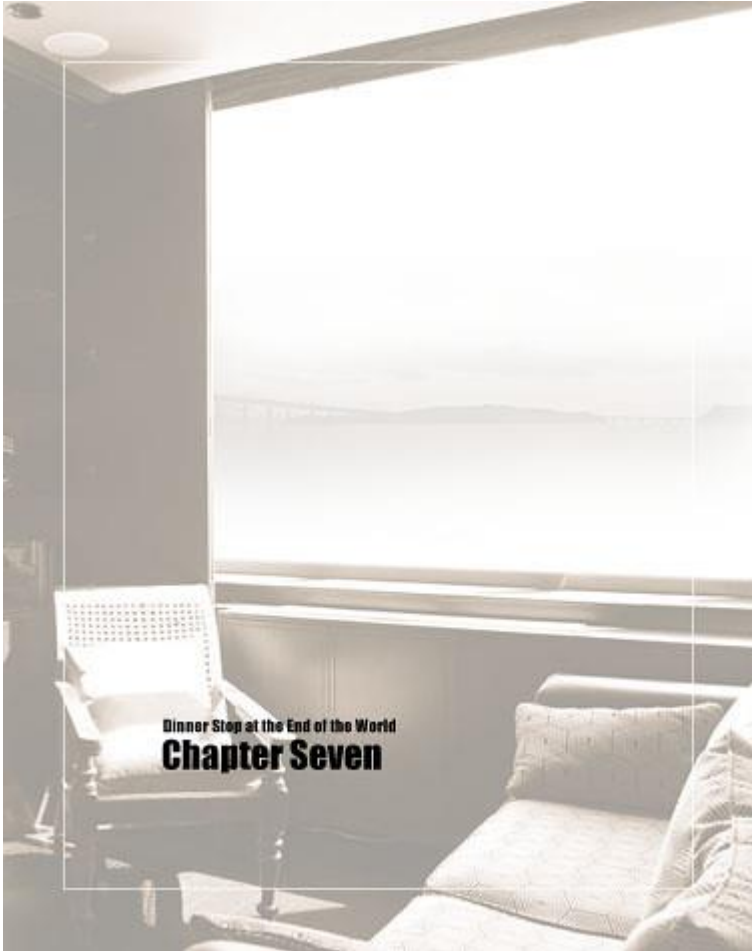
The man who's company had survived shared his own resources until his competitor was whole again. Then the two companies became two distinct entities again. What most people missed was the friendship of the two men in their professional associations. Like rival quarterbacks in professional football, they publicly sparred while privately they acknowledged some sort of brotherhood. With Americans, like any other people, Abdul concluded; you had to look deep beneath the surface. Understanding these people required a vision of a world unseen.



*Greenhouse farms at the Big Diomed Biosphere Interchange.
Graphic by Bob Kirchman*



Tundra Greenhouse Farm.



R*ealists are, as a rule, only men in the rut of routine who are incapable of transcending a narrow circle of antiquated notions." -- Theodor Herzl*

D*ream and deed are not as different as many think. All the deeds of men are dreams at first, and become dreams in the end." -- Theodor Herzl*

Rupert Zimmerman would tell you that he believed only in what he could see. The

problem was that as he worked to build one of the world's great wonders, he knew that he was actually already aware of much more than met his eyes. This troubled him. Zimmerman lived alone in a suite in one of his prefabricated towers in Wales. A vast picture window gave him an unobstructed view of his bridge... but Rupert was becoming ever increasingly aware that it was NOT his bridge, nor Martin's or Elizabeth's. He thought of Samuel Morse: "What hath God wrought?" was his initial thought when the telegraph sprang to life. The bridge belonged to the world... it was something that's time to be had come. Rupert Zimmerman was simply the instrument... in, could it be?, the hand of... God?

Framed by the enormous window, perception of the bridge itself was ever changing with every new season... even every new day! Sometimes the bright Summer sunlight defined the structure precisely. On a foggy day you could perhaps see a few of the marking lights... extreme fog left you staring at a window full of grey nothingness. On a crisp Winter day when the Sun was below the horizon, you could see every light, but not the bridge itself. Zimmerman too was aware of the thousands of cables that worked together to secure the great bridge in place. They were below the water and out of sight. Most of the mass of the bridge's unique pontoons was below the surface. O'Malley had designed them to remain extremely stable in the erratic currents... inspired by proportions found in the natural world.

His wife, Pat Zimmerman, lived in Virginia. She was a lovely woman who had stood by Rupert through decades of failures and successes, but she simply couldn't take the cold dark climate of Wales. Rupert was considered a war criminal in the lower 48 now so he slipped into the country to see her on a fairly regular basis, but without a pattern. Pat's home in Virginia was warm and welcoming. Rupert's suite in Wales was, to put it simply, a "man cave." The furniture was minimalist, to say the least.

The simple white walls were punctuated by large prints of black and white photographs.

Beautiful nature photography by Ansel Adams shared the room with the work of Baltimore photographer A. Aubrey Bodine. Bodine had captured the environment of the Chesapeake Bay and the construction of the first bridge across the bay in the 1950's. Bodine went into the steel mills of Baltimore and photographed the muscular men making the molten material from which great ships and bridges, towers and transport machines were formed.

When the Cathedral of Mary our Queen was being built, Bodine climbed the scaffolding to capture stonemasons building a modern building with their ancient craft. Bodine also captured sublime moments in Baltimore's community: women washing the rows of marble steps on the fronts of seemingly endless rowhouses... children playing in fire hydrants, stevedores and Chesapeake Bay fishermen all were captured by Bodine's observant eye.

As a boy, Zimmerman had been captivated by the photography of Bodine. The Baltimore

Sun Sunday Magazine regularly printed his work and the photographer masterfully captured the spirit of a muscular port city that had had a hand in building a great nation. The 'Brown Section,' as it was called, was a weekly journey into the city's otherwise unnoticed wonders. Bodine worked as a photographer for The Sun for fifty years! Rupert was fascinated by men and women with vision... and the ability to see things in new ways.

On a glass coffee table sat a well-worn copy of Bodine's 'Dignity of Work.' There was also

an even more dog-eared copy of Theodor Herzl's Aultneuland... Herzl's novel presented a vision of modern day Israel but was published in 1902, when there was no such nation. Once Zimmerman had entertained the O'Malleys and the Greens in his suite and Pastor Greene asked him about it. Greene's wife was a fine photographer so as Elizabeth showed her through her father's collection; the industrialist, the engineer and the man of God had lost themselves in conversation.

Kris found herself drawn to a small photo in an out of the way place. Here was a photo

Zimmerman himself had taken of his first grandchild at seven months. Rupert had crouched low to the floor to capture the girl's first attempts to crawl. Her cheeks were rosy from the exertion and her smile beamed: "Look what I can do!" Indeed her heroism seemed right at home beside the larger, more prominent images of steelworkers and stevedores. Zimmerman seemed to possess a keen vision of man's noble potential. Greene would call it 'Imago Dei.'

Herzl was a man with a vision... it is safe to say he was tormented by it." said Rupert:

"The eerie thing is that he was spot-on in describing the nation that was born, or some say REBORN in the so-called 'Promised Land.' When Herzl wrote his novel the land was securely in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. In 1917 England's foreign secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a declaration stating that this land should indeed be given as a homeland to the people who had inhabited it since ancient times. World War I saw the end of the empire and British control. It wasn't until 1947 that Israel was truly 'reborn' in the wake of that terrible war."

Rupert was a man who was prone to ramble on. Greene was the kind of friend who

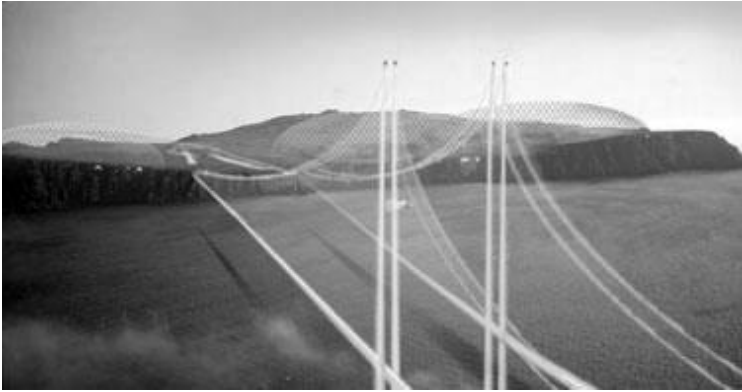
tolerated it because he sensed the man's need to handle ideas many considered outrageous. Zimmerman's insecurity required that he 'footnote' his thoughts, making him a poor conversationalist. Greene was a man of vision too, and sensed this. "Did you know that this little nation is the size of New Jersey in the lower 48, yet she produces more agricultural

output than most large nations of Europe?" Zimmerman opined.

When I wire flowers to Pat, my wife in Virginia, it is safe to say that there is a good chance they came from an Israeli greenhouse!" Rupert went on to describe the amazing technology coming out of this small nation. Artificial sight for the blind, smart cars that 'drove themselves' and cutting-edge agricultural innovation all emanated from this tiny plot of ground. Indeed, Rupert, Martin and Elizabeth looked to this innovative people for much of the wisdom they needed for their work.

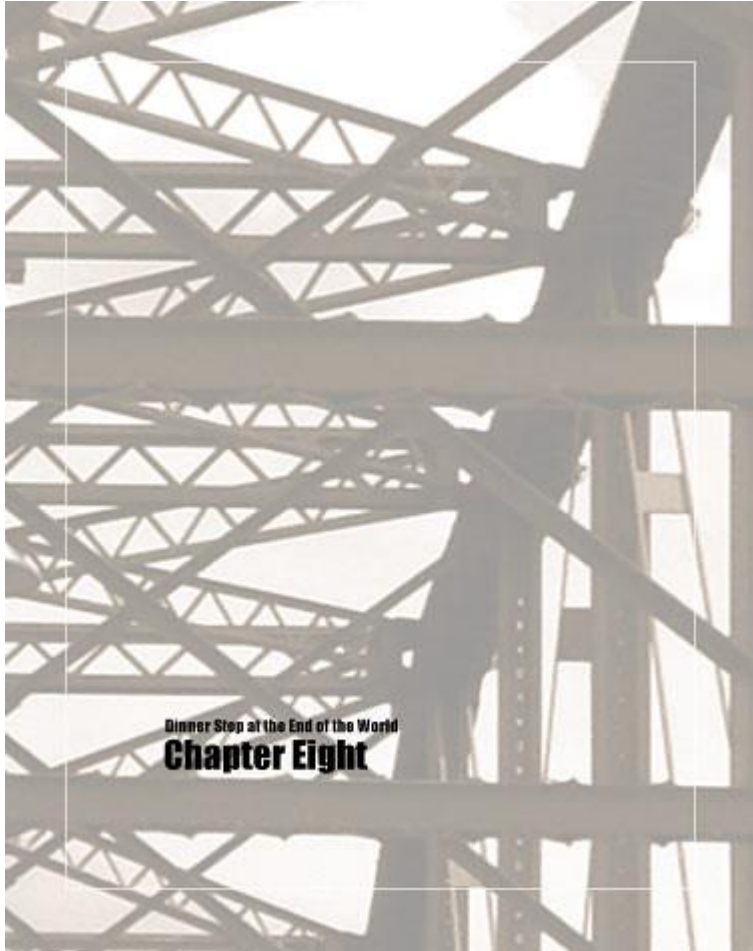
Zimmerman lamented the unfulfilled parts of Herzl's vision. In Aultneuland, there were no prisons. There were farming communities where men were reintroduced to healthy participation in greater community. The stark reality was that prisons around the world had only grown in population and had become schools for societal dysfunction and recidivism. "What," Zimmerman wondered, "would it take for Herzl's vision to become reality?" Zimmerman also lamented that Herzl had envisioned a world where Arab and Jew lived and worked side by side in peace. After the establishment of the nation of Israel, her Arab neighbors Egypt, Syria and Jordan all rushed to wage war on her. Much of the Arab population was incited to flee Israel with the promise that they would return behind the conquering armies. When that didn't happen many of them became permanent refugees. The nations they fled to never enfranchised them. In their bitterness of soul they became easily radicalized.

How does one rebuild the human spirit?" Rupert had asked Greene. He clearly identified the failures in Herzl's vision as failures to do just that. Yet he balked at the notion of so-called "blind faith" in an unseen Divine. He saw Greene's work as that of inspiring men to a higher standard for the here and now. Greene was a man of another Kingdom. Still, when a man like Pastor Greene labored to build the works of this unseen Kingdom, the fruits inevitably flowed forth into the world we know now.



Bering Strait Bridge terminus at Big Diomed.





The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." --
Isaiah 11:6

Who is the little girl?" Kris had asked Rupert that night. There was another photograph of her making a very strange face to show her first two teeth. Yet another showed her taking her first steps! Clearly Rupert adored this child. "That is my Anna's first child... my GRANDDAUGHTER!" Rupert answered.

She's a real cutie!"

Look at the photos closely." said Rupert. "See the heroic struggle of mankind in a very tiny vessel!" Indeed Zimmerman had carefully composed his captures of the girl to emphasize each moment of triumph.

I can say with some certainty that meeting her changed my life."

Rupert continued: "I had built a fairly successful business in the lower 48. I made a lot of money. Then things changed. I saw the business falter. People were seeming to give up hope... even the ones who said they trusted God were stashing food and leaving the stream of life, it seemed. I, a non-believer, was extremely discouraged. With no hope of Heaven, and quite deserving of Hell, if such a place exists; I drank to ease the pain. Pat, my wife, was loving and supportive through it all but could offer me no solace for the here and now."

She doesn't know that one night I went out in the garage and turned on the car with the garage door closed. I wanted to go to sleep and simply forget about living. Something stopped me that night. I heard a bird's song outside the window and I thought of Pat. I've had close colleagues end it all and saw the pain their loved ones carried for years. I just couldn't do that to her... I love her so much!"

Somehow I sensed that if I hung in their a little more, I'd find some reason for hope again.

I needed something to grab on to. Someone had to LEAD the people... like your Moses led the people to the Land of Promise... then Herzl after him. That mission now consumed me! Then Anna, my oldest daughter, called me a few days later and let it slip that she was going to have a baby!"

I know I'm rambling on, but let it be known that I saw in my daughter's little girl the essence of human triumph. She pulled herself up to crawl and each step she took required no motivational program... though we praised her profusely. The struggle was hers. The triumph consumed her will. You know, there are no books needed on how to teach your baby to walk!"

Is it crazy, Pastor Greene, to say that my granddaughter taught me one of the most important lessons in my life?" Green shook his head to reassure the older man that indeed this was a very natural thing: "More people need to observe the ways of Children." he said. "you know the story of Moses begins with a baby. Moses was supposed to have been killed but his mother and his sister conspired to save him. The rest is history, as they say."

Pat says I'm obsessed with my projects... like a baby obsessed with the NEED to walk."

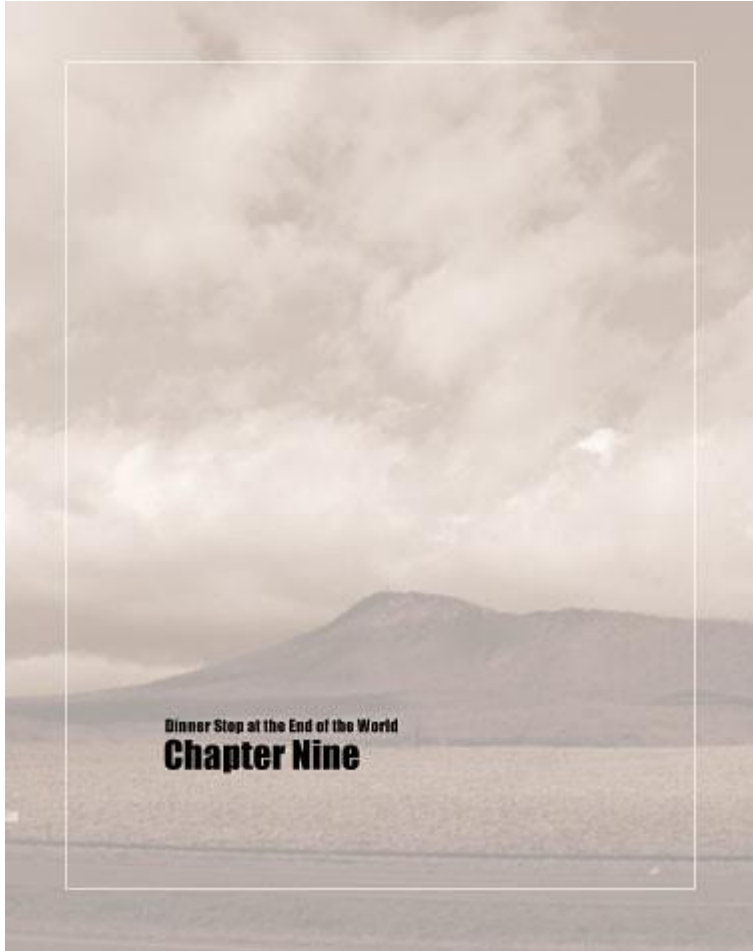
I'd say you NEEDED that dedication to link two continents sir."

Indeed I did, and Martin and Elizabeth did as well." Rupert went on to lament how rare a commodity that was these days. "I wish I could bottle it and sell... no, I wish I could GIVE that away. Heaven knows that we as a species so desperately need it!"

Moses lived so he could part a sea... could it be that you have lived so that one could be bridged?" Greene wanted to continue the thought, but his wife interjected: "Where is the little girl now?"

Oh, she's one of my engineers." smiled the bridge builder. "She and her husband live here in Wales."

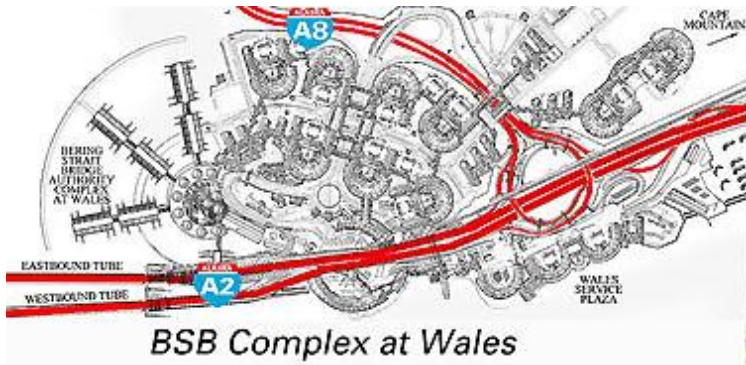




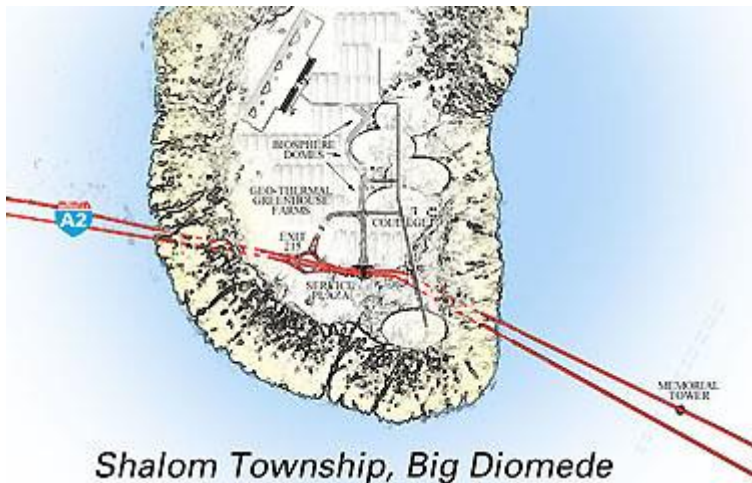
Of all the wonderful feats I have performed, since I have been in this part of the world, I think yesterday I performed the most wonderful. I produced unanimity among fifteen men who were all quarreling about that most ticklish subject -- Taste." -- Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Zimmerman's complex at Wales was originally meant to be simply a construction camp and to continue as a port of entry to the Americas. It was a city in itself that seemed determined to outgrow whatever space was allotted to it. The buildings were fabricated in the same shipyards that produced the components of the great bridge. Indeed one felt like one

was inside a cruise ship walking through the endless connecting corridors. Pat Zimmerman had come up with her husband in the early days but hated the hallways. Her poor circulation made the cold outside unbearable, but the "Labyrinth of Exile," as her husband called the sprawling complex, simply depressed her.



The "Labyrinth of Exile."



He'd taken the name from a biography of Theodor Herzl by that title and it stuck. It was a

machine produced environment created of necessity. In great design rooms people like Pat's granddaughter were creating wonders like the Big Diomed Biosphere and the tundra farms. Still, if the design studios were a rich world, the connective tissue of the hallways and public spaces was an impoverished one. The small band of overachievers engaged in this great work required little in the way of diversions. Pat could not survive in such a sterile world. With great sorrow, Rupert resigned himself to the life devoid of family that so many of the world's great innovators seemed to be sentenced to.

The Biosphere and the calling of the Greenes was born largely out of a desire to correct

this. Pat had been initially impressed when she visited and saw the richness of Kris' little house in contrast to Rupert's sterile hallways. She thought it an anomaly though and didn't want to lose the circle of supportive friends she had in Virginia. The Biosphere was nice, but it was a small circle of light in a very large entity that seemed to Pat more like an oil camp on steroids. If she took notice of how Rupert seemed drawn to the Biosphere and its gardens, she must have been skeptical of it. Rupert had always befuddled his wife. He loved to photograph the flowers in their Virginia garden but often forgot to water them. He was her own real-life version of James Thurber's fictional "Walter Mitty," often seeming to inhabit another world. Unlike the fictional Mitty, Zimmerman was building his 'other world' and a world starved for such endeavors embraced him for it.

Zimmerman wondered at how such basic needs as breathing and the need to walk

required no motivation, yet standing in a man's full potential eluded the ability to teach. He devoted himself to studying how men might develop the hunger to rise to the height of their potential and walk in it. He sparred often with Greene over how to inspire men. Marx had called religion the "Opiate of the Masses," yet Rupert thought it was more like the pills drivers took to keep them awake on the long road to Yakutsk. It was, to Zimmerman, a necessary boost in the driver's innate alertness. "Truck Wrecks on the Siberia Highway" were a macabre subject of continual fascination on the internet. The fact that these incidents were few and often photoshopped did nothing to shatter the myth. The road was truly dangerous.

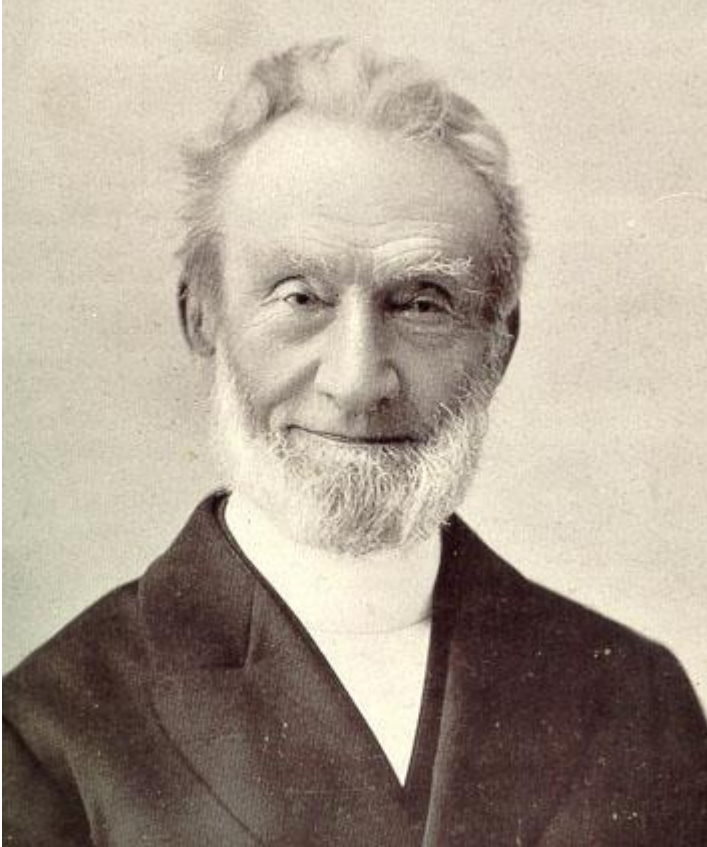
Rupert pondered great moments in history. There was the Battle of Trenton where a band

of weary patriots turned the tide of America's Revolution. The American response to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the resolve to win the world's most horrific war on multiple fronts preceeded the establishment of Herzl's vision. Yet in his own lifetime, Zimmerman had seen the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington met with an initial resolve that soon withered. America resigned herself to whatever forces the world would throw it. Such Fatalism went against Zimmerman's constitution. As students of engineering found their way to his studios, Zimmerman rounded out their education with a healthy dose of history... and that history full of the stories of overcomers!

Rupert's school also looked at life through the Macro-lens as well. He learned that infants,

no different from his granddaughter he surmised, had been placed in an orphanage in Tehran, Iran. The attendants of this place merely fed and changed the infants. There was no cuddling, no interaction, there simply wasn't time for that. An appalling percentage of these precious souls never sat up, never walked... they simply died. He studied long and hard the

transformation in society's view of orphans in the Victorian Era. Men like Charles Dickens and George Müller had seen the wretched street urchins most people despised as jewels to be polished. Müller, relying solely on Divine provision, built five large houses for Orphans at Ashley Downs in Bristol, England. He trained the girls to be nurses, teachers, clerical workers and domestics. He apprenticed all the boys in various trades. He was excoriated for training these unwanted children "above their station." He ignored the critics.



George Müller.

When William Wilberforce had ended the slave trade in the British Empire, he had thrown the city of Bristol into economic depression. The port there was heavily devoted to that wretched business and suffered heavily when it was brought to a sudden halt. The unintended consequence had been a rise in children condemned to a life of poverty. Ending the vile business of enslaving Africa's children had resulting in England's society spurning the needs of her own.

In 1831, 24 year old Isambard Kingdom Brunel was awarded a contract to bridge the Avon Gorge. It was the dream of a prosperous wine merchant who provided the initial funding. The completed bridge would become the symbol of the city, but lack of funding dogged the project. It took thirty years to complete it. For years only the towers stood completed. In 1833 Brunel began work on the Great Western Railway, which would become the instrument of Bristol's economic revitalization. The nicknames: "Great Way Round" and "God's Wonderful Railway" seem to describe well Brunel's great work.



Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge became the symbol of the City of Bristol.



Building the Great Western Railway.

Zimmerman and his apprentices studied the work of men like Brunel, who in the

Nineteenth Century had built shipyards and had designed the first propeller driven transatlantic steamship. Like the steelworkers in Bodine's photographs, they seemed involved in the pouring of some fiery inventiveness beyond their ability to create on their own. In fact, the stuff of creativity seemed dangerous, its mishandling capable of reducing its handler to ash. The more Zimmerman accomplished, it is safe to say, the less ownership he felt of the work he'd seen accomplished.



Children at Ashly Down.



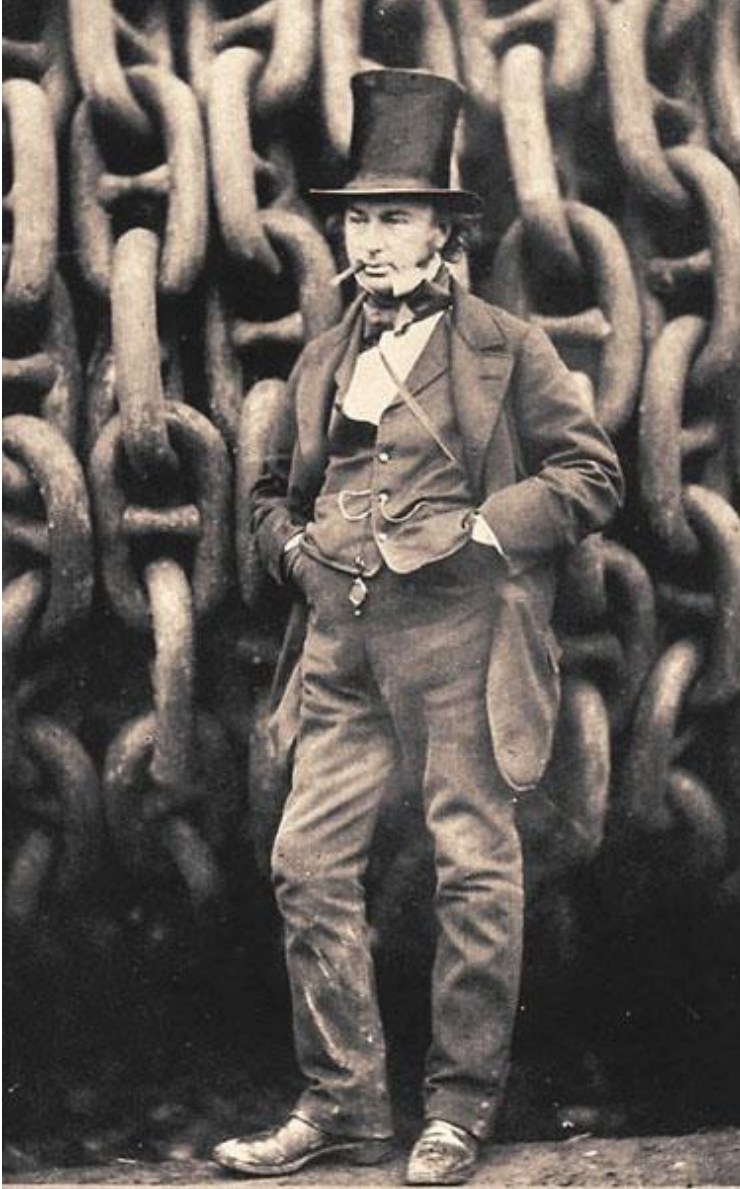
Children at Ashly Down received education and training for future employment. the day started at 6am for the orphans, normal for working-class children of Victorian times.



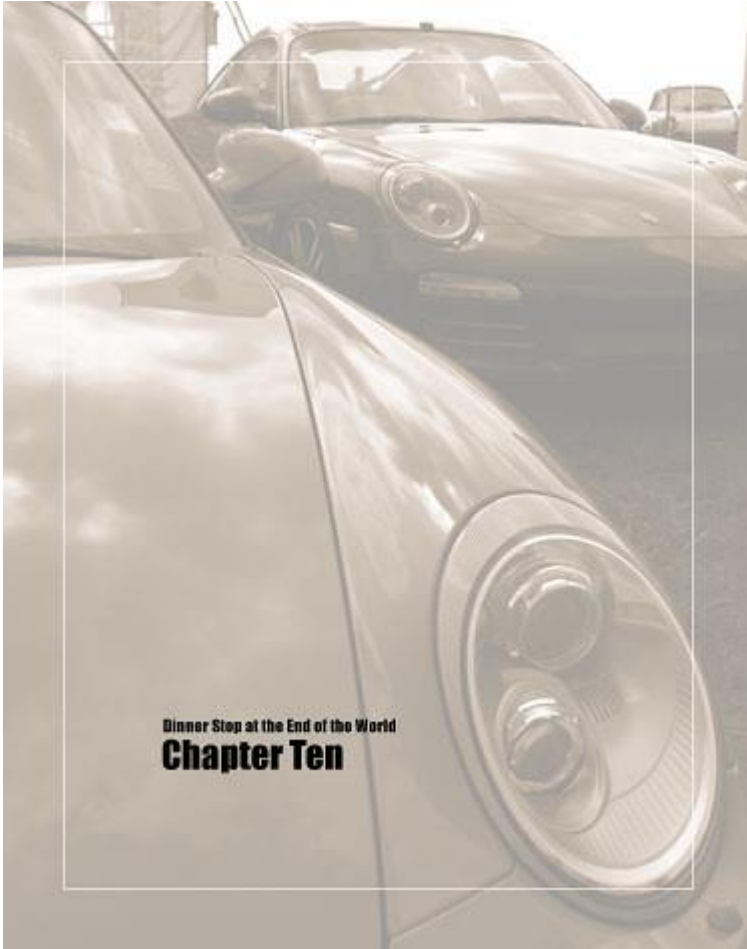
While boys would be placed in apprenticeships at age 14, the young ladies would remain until 17. They received training to be Nurses, Teachers and Domestic Servants [as the group in maids' uniforms above].



William Wilberforce.



Isambard Kingdom Brunel.



Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind" -- Dr. Seuss

God's Excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind" -- Jonathan Edwards

Rupert Zimmerman sped his Porsche 911 Classic across the BSB in the soft light of the midnight sun. With Elizabeth and her husband off cutting the ribbon on a new school in Zambia, Zimmerman had dared to swing a 'road trip' to Big Diomedea earlier the previous afternoon. Though he never attended the church he'd funded there, he looked forward to the intellectual sparring with Pastor Greene he might find in a dinner invitation. The lure of Kris' homemade cookies and the possibility of homemade macaroni and cheese (her mother's recipe), often sealed the deal. The man who could buy everything, save the love of a family, was drawn to the table by the trappings of that which those who are rich in money often miss. While around the word at many a poor table the laughter of children and the smells of familiar dishes mingled deliciously, men like Zimmerman were fed by personal chefs in a sterility that no spices could dissipate. Kris was starting to show and soon there'd be another life at their table. Zimmerman cherished these visits, knowing that the baby would probably mean an end to the leisure to visit.

Zimmerman had indeed been blessed with homemade macaroni, and the conversation had gone deep into the night. "What do you think is your purpose in life?" Greene had asked. "To build that damn bridge!... Sorry Reverend!" was his lightning retort. Greene deftly turned the conversation: "Who gets the glory from that bridge?" Zimmerman had stepped too easily into the trap. "Damn..." If he said "I Do!" it would be an arrogant assertion of the surface truth. If he thought of all the unseen hands and inventiveness behind it, the "modest" answer, but indeed the truer one, he would swerve solidly into the realm of Divine Inspiration. Though he sternly resisted it, Zimmerman was beginning to believe in it. Inwardly he knew that it had taken far more than his own cunning to create a Bering Strait Bridge. Elizabeth's husband, the engineer, had as much as told him that nature itself had provided answers to the seemingly insurmountable challenges faced in actually building the bridge.

Martin O'Malley had once related to Zimmerman the story of R. G. LeTourneau, who's company had been awarded a contract to build a machine to lift airplanes by the government during the great war. No one had ever built such a machine before, and the engineers were stumped. Wednesday evening rolled around and LeTourneau announced to his stunned team that he was going to a prayer meeting. "But, sir,... We've got a deadline on this thing!" The great industrialist replied: "But I have a deadline with God." LeTourneau went to the prayer meeting. He sang praises and poured out his heart in earnest prayer. He said that walking back to his office from the prayer meeting, he 'saw' the design he was seeking for the machine clearly in his head!

He was trapped anyway, so Zimmerman recited the LeTourneau story for Pastor Greene.

It was easier for him to state the obvious in third person anyway. But state it he did. It was

the first time Greene had actually ever heard Zimmerman acknowledge God's hand. Surely it was a milestone for him of some sort. Zimmerman wondered aloud to the young Pastor how Letourneau or Martin O'Mally could pray almost as if conversing with the Divine?... was it possible for a hard, faithless man like Zimmerman to pray like that?

There was a man, I believe more heartless than you..." Greene began. "His name was John Newton and he traded in the souls of men..."

Newton's story, Greene concluded, could be summed up in the great hymn he had written:

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound; That saved a wretch like me..."

Greene and Zimmerman, for the first time ever, prayed together. Intellectual discussion that leads nowhere was something Zimmerman never had time for. Kris had long since retired, but Zimmerman saw the supper dishes and offered to help Greene clean up. Greene tried to decline the offer but Zimmerman found himself barking as if to one of his bridge superintendents: "I'll load the dishwasher." If God's heart was seen in service, and Zimmerman had seen plenty of examples lately, the least he could do was return the favor.

The newer Eastbound span was closed for cleaning and maintenance work. The hazmat schedule was light that evening and security waved Zimmerman through even though it was a violation of protocol for hazmat hours to let him through without permits. Once before a guard had stopped Zimmerman from doing the same thing... he'd entered hazmat blockout without his identification badge, and the guard turned him around. The man, realizing too late who he had denied access, feared for his job. Indeed was called into Zimmerman's office the next morning... where he received a raise and a promotion. That was in the early days when Zimmerman was not as well recognized. He suspected he'd been tagged by facial recognition software this time anyway, so he drove onto the bridge resolving to forget the matter. If, and he still had his doubts, God could indeed forgive a ruthless industrialist, the ruthless industrialist could surely extend the favor to one of his staff.

Driving up the suspended ship crossing of the old BSB leaving Big Diomedea, something didn't feel right. Was it the relaxed security? Zimmerman's least favorite part of the span was the ship channel crossing on the old span. He and Martin had fought viciously over the length

of the suspension span. Martin wanted a longer, more gradual rise but Zimmerman was seeing serious cost overruns and overrode his engineer to demand the shortest span allowable. That led to the notorious 'blind hump' that truckers cursed continually. The newer span had been built longer to correct the problem, but tonight traffic was diverted to the old bridge.

To compensate, a driver activated warning system had been installed to stop traffic if

necessary. It had been tested but never actually deployed. Zimmerman's thoughts wandered to the potential killer he had unwittingly created... A blast of an air horn burst his ears... two 53' trailers were flying sidewise in his direction over the hump! They seemed captured in an eery waltz as they turned, scraping and sparks filled the tube! Zimmerman thought he saw the silhouette of a man running, but he might of imagined it. The warning lights came on! One of the drivers had been able to hit the in-cab button. Releasing from their death-dance, the two trucks exited through the wall of the tube with a loud crash! Zimmerman ground his brakes, bringing the 911 to a halt. A third trailer had jackknifed as well and blocked all the lanes.

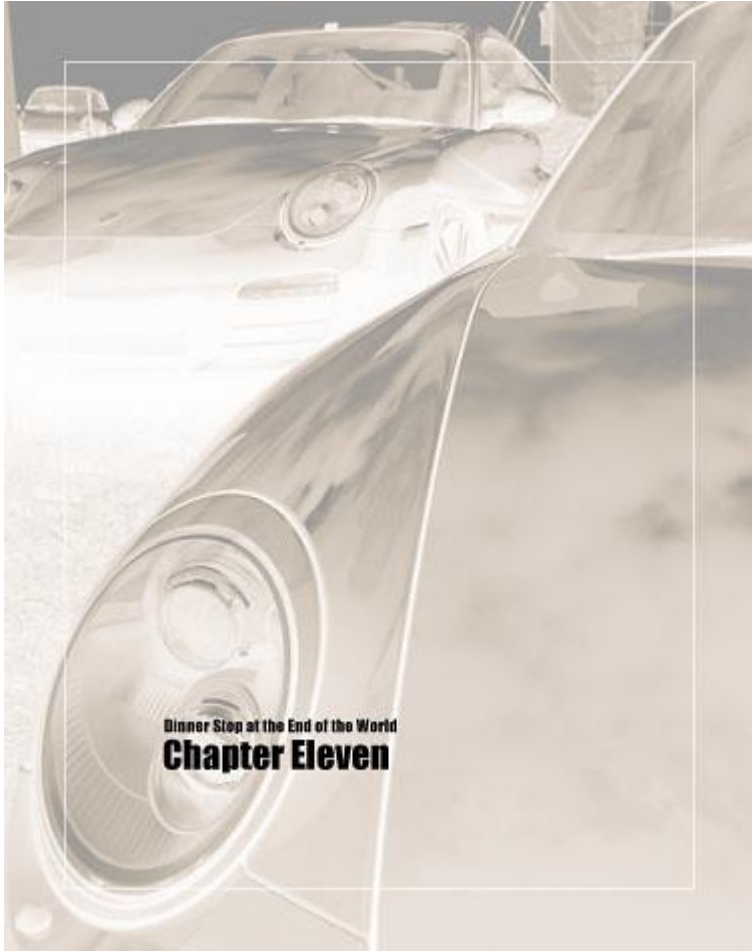
The overhead lights flickered, then there was only darkness! The wind from the wound in

the tube wall filled the bridge with a salty sea air. Zimmerman was transported by the smell to family beach trips where he was the avid sand castle builder. Once he'd jokingly dug a hole in the sand, added approach ramps and created the "Tunnel to France." They'd laughed. It was a ridiculous idea, but now, you could indeed drive to France... but what was the cost? Was this an act of terrorism thwarted?, or still in the making. Terrorists always struck when security became complacent, and Zimmerman's being on the span now was due to just such a lapse! The trucks piercing the wall had resulted in communications dropping out. Zimmerman tried to call his security office... silence!

With all of the BSB communications created as phone apps, there was no service.

Zimmerman picked up his cell... he caught a faint signal from the phone tower in Wales. Unable to raise anyone on his staff, Zimmerman feared the worst. His bridge might just become his tomb! How thankful he was for his timely lesson in prayer! He was not afraid of dying, as he feared he would be in a situation like this. Still, a sense of unfinished business gnawed at him... not a great work to be built, or quest to be won, but a lady's heart. Tonight he had indeed tasted undeserved love... but he had known it once before, deep in his past. It would be a decent hour in Virginia he thought as he pushed the phone button to call Pat.





I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for that day" -- Abraham Lincoln

What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and walk humbly with thy God" --
Micah 6:8

Approaching Big Diomedea, the BSB rises on suspension cables for another ship passage.

On the old Eastbound span this suspension span was fairly short, resulting in the only blind descent in the whole system. Engineers calculate such features to save money and regret doing so for years afterward. Chris geared down as he climbed, but kept momentum. Surely the lead truck was on the island by now. Once clear of the big spans, convoy restrictions were eased. Chris and Joe bantered about a coffee stop and dinner when they hit the end of the safety restriction corridor.

Chris was caught up in elsewhere thoughts when he topped the rise. DAMN!, the fertilizer hopper appeared suddenly. The young driver must have jackknifed. His rig filled both of the lanes. No time to stop! all reaction. 'Joe, STOP ! BRAKES!!!,' Chris screamed into the phone as he slid out of control. Metal ground upon metal. What happened in seconds seemed like an eternity. As Chris' rig folded the two masses collided like pool balls, the ricochet sent the collected mass through the wall of the suspended tunnel, tumbling over the guardrail into the inky blackness of space.

F*ALLING! Falling into blackness! A blanket of blackness rushed up to meet him. Cold blackness!, a flash of light and then darkness! Funny, Chris had always dreaded drowning. He could work himself into a weird frame of mind and keep awake just by contemplating it. Now he was enveloped by the deepest darkness. But it was more like that of a womb, there was no gasping for breath, no swallowing of cold saltwater, but an eerie calm. Chris seemed to be floating effortlessly.*

A*light shined above him. Chris seemed to float toward it, upward. Light rippled as he remembered swimming under the surface as a child! in fact, wonderful sensations, suppressed in adolescence began to fill Chris' soul. There was that feeling, like the night before a wonderful anticipation of Christmas, where some wonderful expectation would soon come to be reality that one could hold in one's hand!*

C*hris found himself lying on the bank of a small pool in a lovely woods. Light now filtered through the leaves of majestic oaks. It was a morning light, rich in it's goldness. He could have rested there for hours, days even, he thought. There was no desire he felt compelled to fulfill. Chris pondered: "So this is what contentment feels like." Yes, he'd peered into the eyes of a few people who seemed to know the secret of this place. A lone figure moved silently toward Chris. Here was a man who made no sound as he walked. Here was a Man so lovely it did not seem odd to want to fall prostrate before him.*

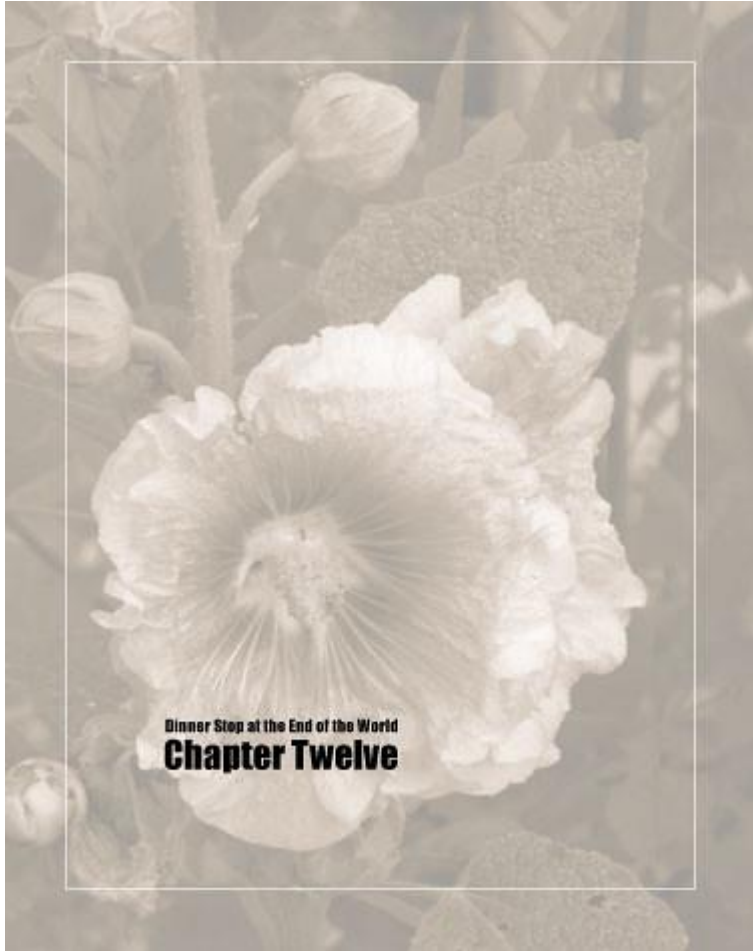
*I*t seemed like a long time that Chris lay speechless in the soft grass. Then a hand touched Chris on the shoulder: a wounded hand, and then a voice, kind and gentle,, yet firm as a mountain said: "Come see what 'I'm working on!"

Joe had ground his rig to a quick stop, painting black stripes on the pavement with his tires. He came to rest, his trailer awkwardly jackknifed across the now clear highway. A few pieces of wreckage lay about and there was a gaping hole in the side of the structure, the slab below Joe still oscillated from the force created by the impact. The tube's lights flickered and died as a conduit bent beyond its design limitations. A sea breeze rushed in through the wounded travelway's shredded wall. Joe quickly punched the in-cab button that would activate a warning system. Traffic would stop now. Soon the BSBS would arrive to secure the scene and perform their investigation.

Joe peered into the inky void in the wall of the tunnel. Chris was gone. There was the overwhelming rush of deepest sorrow. He lost track of the next minutes, but found himself being held by a man who had apparently driven up unseen. Joe always had a hard time letting go of those people he deeply loved, yet there was a profound feeling of peace. He sobbed unrestrained tears, wanting to get that out of the way before the tough BSBS team members arrived to investigate with their steely eyes and sabre mustaches, but inwardly he sensed a rejoicing; odd, but it seemed that this was not a blind hope, but a sure knowledge that Chris was in the hands of one who could finally answer his questions.

All the late-night arguments and coffee conversations seemed now to have been directed by an unseen hand. The investment of time was not wasted. The predawn light was splashing a bit of rose lightly over the grey sea. Gulls called to one another. Morning was waking at the end of the world.





L*et not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." -- John 14:1-3*

The BSBS investigators swept the young Turk away. He had leapt from his cab after he jackknifed and took off running. A tunnel spotter saw him sprinting toward Big Diomedes and tackled him to the pavement. He turned out to be no terrorist at all, but a man woefully out of his familiar world. Hitting a bit of slick pavement at a faulty tube seal, he had over-corrected

for the slide as he was running a bit too fast over the 'hump.' Joe felt compassion for him, a young man who was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. He felt badly for the initial rage he had directed toward him.

Joe regretted his emotional outpourings long after he felt them... he seemed so often to fail as the solid personality he admired in others. Yet now the words of his old Pastor in Virginia came to mind... that doing something new and badly was far better than perfect repetition that advanced nothing. Joe may have loved those around him poorly, but at least he sought new heights in loving them. Could he have advanced some Divine design in doing so? He thought of Willa and Katie. He had indeed abandoned them to 'find himself' in the wilds of Siberia, yet the devotion he saw in their eyes on SKYPE testified to a different reality.

Joe handed off his rig to a relief driver who was flown to Big Diomedes. They would fly Joe out when he requested, but he would have to make the call. Some guys would take a deep breath and get right back to driving after a wreck. Some needed to step away. Joe felt like he needed time and space. Kris' husband was the pastor of the little church on Big Diomedes and like Priscilla and Aquilla of old, they welcomed the old driver into their home and 'showed him a more excellent way.' Like Bilbo Baggins in the house of Elron, his countenance relaxed and he wore a mantle of peace.

The hollyhocks were blooming in Kris' garden now, and Joe spent hours in their colorful company. They were for Kris a connection to her Great-grandmother, planted from pods taken from her garden, but for the old trucker they took on a different meaning. He longed to snip a few discreetly and carry them to Willa. She'd accuse him of stealing them, like she did when he first brought her daffodils during their courtship. He found himself idly drawing their blossoms on a piece of printer paper. The little garden nurtured more than flowers. It seemed to nurture both contemplation and reconciliation. The old man had sought something staring out a windshield into the vast tundra. It found him in this tiny but well-nurtured plot of ground.



Slowly Joe's thoughts became clear again. He even scribbled in a notebook under the title

"There and Back Again," collecting his thoughts. But the line of the map had a sure direction now. Sitting in a bit of Virginia recreated on Big Diomedea, his heart was drawn ever stronger to the REAL Virginia. He SKYPED Willa for hours now. They had wracked up huge phone bills during their courtship and now Joe feared he was wearing out his welcome on the parsonage computer. He felt bad about it, and left a 'donation' discreetly under the mousepad.

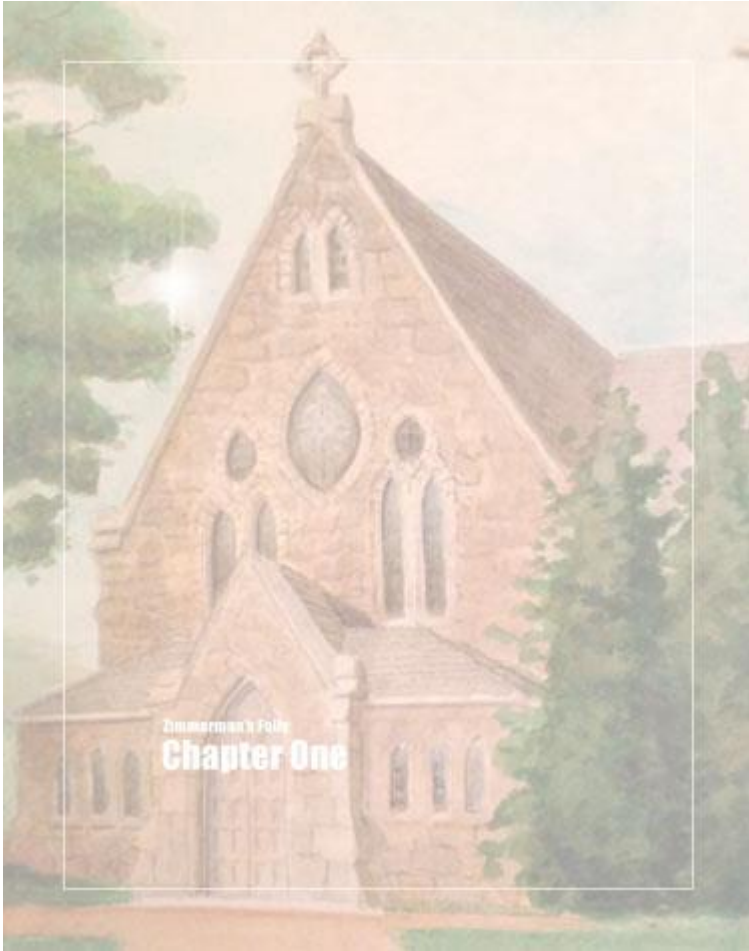
Still, it was Willa who had stood together with him through the good times and the bad.

They had shared caring for Willa's aging parents and nurturing little Kate. Joe had made her little cards with illustrations of a little gardener. Together they had nurtured two children, weathered the failure of Joe's businesses and found new purpose looking into the deep blue eyes of their Granddaughter. They were, together, the kind of spirits that nourished those around them. Alone in the cab, Joe was but a man of thoughts, thoughts devoid of action.

Joe had to admit he'd been running. The big checks from Intercontinental Logistics were a poor substitute for what Willa needed now. 'Discovering' some colored pencils and deckle-edged paper in his room, he drew a little fellow with a watering can. A garden now flowed from Joe's hand. The flowers filled the page with their vivid forms. Opening the card, his eyes grew moist. "Dear Willa," the words flowed from Joe's hand. "Please forgive me." The wanderer was coming home.







Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:18-19

When peace like a river attendeth my way..."

Kris' beautiful soprano voice carried the old hymn as it filled the little church on Big Diomedes. The memorial service for Rupert Zimmerman had begun. After successfully

building and operating the twin spans across the Diomedes that linked Siberia to Alaska, Zimmerman had embarked on a venture to build a more Southern crossing across St. Lawrence Island. Though the day of the groundbreaking dawned with a chill and an icy rain, the old man had insisted on turning the first spade of earth. He returned to Wales and took sick, never to leave his bed again. At ninety-three years of age, Rupert Zimmerman succumbed to pneumonia.

His wife Pat and daughter Elizabeth were by his side as he passed away, Elizabeth's

husband Martin and the next generation of children came in and out of the room quietly, but constantly. The loner who had fought all odds to build what had never been built before now basked once more in the joy of family! Pat tried to keep him on a healthy diet to the very end but Kris sneaked in a big dish of macaroni and cheese anyway. The aroma carried Zimmerman back to memories of big dinners with extended family in the big white farmhouse in Virginia. His eyes closed for the last time after a grandchild had done something naughty in the room... prompting a scolding from her mother, while reminding Zimmerman of a similar incident of shared complicity with a favorite cousin! Pat saw through her tears, she thought, a smile... no, was it a mischievous grin?, then the old man was at last at peace.

Kris fought tears as she brought the hymn to a close. Her husband rose to give, or so

everyone thought, the eulogy. Though his eyes were red, his face had a look of mischief upon it as he produced a letter. "We are here to remember Rupert Zimmerman, a man who always had to have the last word. Well, true to form, Mr. Zimmerman handed this to me a few days ago." Some people chuckled quietly. Greene continued: "Rupert Zimmerman's story is an unusual one, to be sure. No doubt he will go down in history for his foresight and perseverance in building one of the great wonders of the world. That, Mr. Zimmerman felt, would be a gross oversimplification."

D*ear Friends, and those who would never call me friend, dare I say you who will never find it in your heart to forgive me,*

I*do not want to be enshrined as the hero I am not, nor do I wish to be simply reviled as the monster I indeed was. Please humor a dying man and listen to my story:"*

Zimmerman began with a description of the day he and Martin O'Malley had camped on the mountain at Wales, having secured the capital and commitment necessary to build his

great bridge. They'd brought a large quantity of Guinness along to toast their new venture. Staring across the Strait at midnight, they began to raise their glasses in salutes, both lofty and unprintable, to the great work they were about to embark on. They succeeded in getting terribly drunk and setting their tent on fire, destroying their provisions. Ashamed to drag themselves back into Nome early, they slept under the stars and ate the flora that they'd learned about in survival training. They'd concocted a story about getting very sick but Elizabeth knew her father and her husband too well to buy it. To her credit, she'd let them keep it.

Elizabeth was the Zimmerman's youngest daughter, but she was the one who was kindred spirit to her dad. Pat rolled her eyes thinking of how they'd conspired to bring ice cream into the house time after time during her girlhood. Rupert and Elizabeth had hiked some of the Appalachian Trail together and they had formed a bond that had carried well into their working life. Zimmerman had gone through a slew of assistants before bringing Elizabeth in saying: "Try this and see if you like it, if you do we'll make a job for you here." Elizabeth had the uncanny ability to read her father. She could call him on a questionable decision but knew him well enough to tolerate his seeming to follow rabbit trails. More than once she'd 'reconstructed' documents that he'd misplaced or simply forgotten rather than make a scene demanding them.

She and Martin had both put their foot down when Zimmerman had demanded the Big Diomedes Ship Crossing Suspension Bridge not run over what he'd originally budgeted. Cost overruns were threatening to stop the project and investors were ready to bail, but the cheaper span resulted in a short suspension span that rose and fell rapidly, creating a 'blind hill' for drivers approaching the top of the arc. Zimmerman was never much for saying: "I can't afford it.", but his clear proclamation: "Bad bridge or no bridge." was something even Zimmerman's closest colleagues, his son-in-law and daughter couldn't argue with.





T*o improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often.*" -- Sir Winston Churchill

Rupert Zimmerman first laid eyes on Siberia through the window of a Boeing 747 400

bound for Osaka. He asked the flight attendant what he was looking at and she gave a sly smile: "We can send you there if you like... it's SIBERIA!" Snow covered ragged mountains passed beneath the plane. At first there was only wild beauty in black and white... then a little

village would appear. Surely this was unconquerable country. Indeed this wilderness would prove to be the greatest challenge in building the Bering Strait Bridge.

Zimmerman, at a time most men would retire, still had the insatiable desire to build. A real estate developer, he had made his fortune in the lower 48 anticipating trends and building economically. When his daughter Elizabeth married Martin O'Malley, he found a man to match his mountains. O'Malley knew the difference between true economy and cheap. As most people in the industry turned out badly built product, Martin learned how to rethink building so that craftsmanship was still present. He partnered with an innovative Swede to pre-manufacture his houses. With no weather delays and craftsmen organized in one shop, Martin and Zimmerman delivered quality and value in a world that was starved for it.

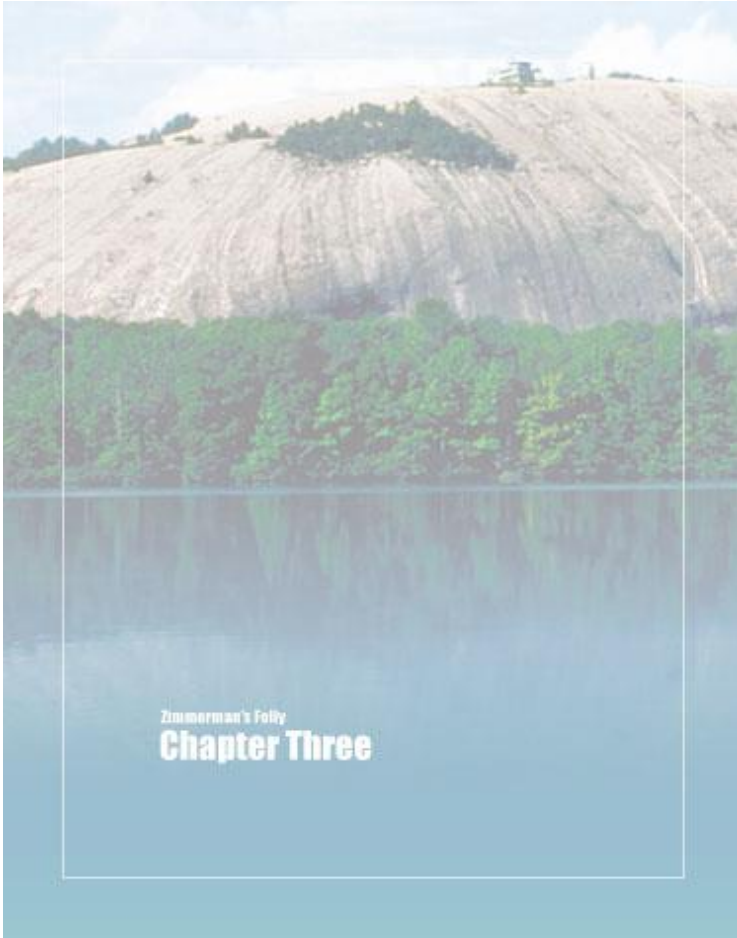
Martin's background was civil engineering and now the two men turned their attention to a work of epic proportions. Zimmerman and Elizabeth produced beautiful renderings of what could be called nothing less than one of the great wonders of the world. Martin's calculations brought about the realization that the bridge was no more impossible than the Chunnel or the transcontinental railroad had been in their day. He studied the building of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-tunnel in Virginia. He'd essentially have to build two Bay Bridge-tunnels to link Siberia to Alaska.

The main reason England and France took so long to be physically connected was not possibility, but politics. Since the Norman Conquest the English Channel was seen as a deterrent to invasion. In World War II, the channel was an important barrier, far more non-negotiable than the Maginot Line. The Bering Strait had served as a similar divide between the world's two superpowers. In the end it was Elizabeth, assistant to her father, and not Martin or Rupert that bridged that barrier. Elizabeth deftly managed Zimmerman's meeting with the cash-starved Russians. Zimmerman simply wanted a right-of-way, Elizabeth saw the opportunity for more.

Taking quite a risk, Elizabeth suggested the creation of the Siberian Autonomous District, a self-governing entity to administer the Siberian approach road. Russia would receive a percentage of the profits from oil and development in the district, but Russia would not administer it. Realizing his daughter's brilliance, Zimmerman cut her a percentage that would ultimately make her richer than her father. One unusual trait Rupert possessed was the ability to be comfortable with people on his team who outperformed him. Indeed, he didn't consider himself all that brilliant. He would always ruminate on the wonder of having Martin and Elizabeth's dynamic energy at his service... and he loved them for it.

How many times he'd seen it. A man like Zimmerman would assemble a brilliant team, the venture would flourish. Then, the super-ego of the man in the big chair would say: "That salesman is making TOO MUCH MONEY!" Commissions would be cut, brilliant people would move on to reestablish themselves with a competitor. The brilliant venture would wither at the hands of its creator. Zimmerman always credited much of his success to knowing how to get out of the way. He'd once worked for a man who couldn't let go of his great work. The man had thrown himself into building his great work, neglecting his wife and daughters. He proclaimed himself too important to bother with the affairs of family. He ended up divorcing his wife and marrying his secretary!





To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable." C. S. Lewis

Pat was a beautiful slender brunette, the love of Zimmerman's life. He met her while he was struggling to build his career and soon found himself spending hours in conversation

with her. With only the intention of an afternoon hike on his mind (or at least that was his story), he took her to walk on Georgia's Stone Mountain. Zimmerman and his friends loved to hike up Stone Mountain and they avoided the luxury of the tram like the plague. Invoking some primitive machismo, they'd revel in the exertion. Rupert immediately bought tram tickets for himself and Pat. They would ride up and walk down, Rupert treasured Pat's company but struggled with the idea of marriage. Still, she was deliciously cute in her pink shorts outfit. They enjoyed a picnic on the rocky top of the mountain and began their descent.

Walking down the mountain they were caught in a sudden thunderstorm. Drenched to the skin, they were laughing and embracing one another. "I want you to be my wife!" Zimmerman proclaimed. Pat responded: "I want you to be my husband!" She thought for a moment... "Does this mean we're engaged?"

Indeed it did. The ring and formalities would follow, but Zimmerman would, after the incident on the bridge years later, say that an unseen hand gave him his bride and later met him on his own bridge that night. Indeed, Zimmerman had joyfully married Pat, but had drifted into the ways of his old boss... immersing himself in his work as his ventures struggled and failed. By the time he'd succeeded he had become a good but distant provider. Elizabeth was the child most like him and she filled an important void... as daughter and as his assistant. Pat seemed preoccupied for a while with those prophets of doom who write novels about the world blowing up and sell a lot of books. She wanted to prepare for apocalypse, Zimmerman wanted to build a better world.

Rupert and Pat both loved young people. They reveled in the love Elizabeth, their youngest daughter, had for Martin. Zimmerman refused to give up hope for them to live in a bright beautiful world like he'd grown up in. He often remembered how towards the end of the Nineteenth Century someone had suggested that the patent office be closed, saying: "Everything that is going to be invented has already been invented." Zimmerman laughed at the idea that that was ever seriously considered. Indeed invention seemed to have withered in the Twentieth Century as government investment propped up a succession of poorly designed prototypes of "green" technology. In the small nation of Israel, however, Zimmerman would find incredible innovation. He invested in the development of artificial sight technology being developed there to aid the blind and made a small fortune.



Photo by Bob Kirchman



Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: *'What! You too? I thought I was the only one.'*" -- C. S. Lewis

Now that small fortune became the initial capitalization for Zimmerman's great bridge.

With investment pouring in and a bond offering being finalized, Rupert and Martin embarked on the infamous camping trip to Wales. A bush pilot carried them and their gear into Wales where they set out to hike to the great hill where their bridge would spring from. They insisted on going alone and struggled to carry out a copious quantity of Guinness, O'Malley's favorite beer. After toasting the venture over and over, Rupert suggested a swim in

the strait... the first ever meeting of the "Prudhoe Bay Beach Club!" Drunk and fighting hypothermia, they proceeded to set their tent on fire, destroying all their supplies. They managed to assemble a shelter and dry themselves and their clothes by the fire.

Zimmerman and O'Malley engaged in a heated discussion of fire suppression systems for their bridge and engaged in a fairly beneficial analysis of the fire that had closed the English Channel Tunnel in the past Century. They stumbled into Wales a week later with a safety and security plan well developed and handed it to their designers.

In his last communication with his loved ones on Earth, Zimmerman wanted to set the record straight lest the "heroic survival" legend persist. If the truth be known, Rupert enjoyed the legend that had come to surround him, but he valued accuracy in history even more. He had also become keenly aware of the value of admitting his errors in judgement to his most trusted apprentices. The young and brilliant men and women who came to Wales to shadow him probably benefited most from learning how NOT to proceed in a given situation. Ironically, it had seemed hardest for Zimmerman to admit his weaknesses to Pat.



The unique pontoon design allowed for rapid fabrication in shipyards while providing a minimum exposure for workers to the harsh and variable conditions in the Bering Strait. They were floated into place by seagoing tugs and anchored by cables placed by robotic

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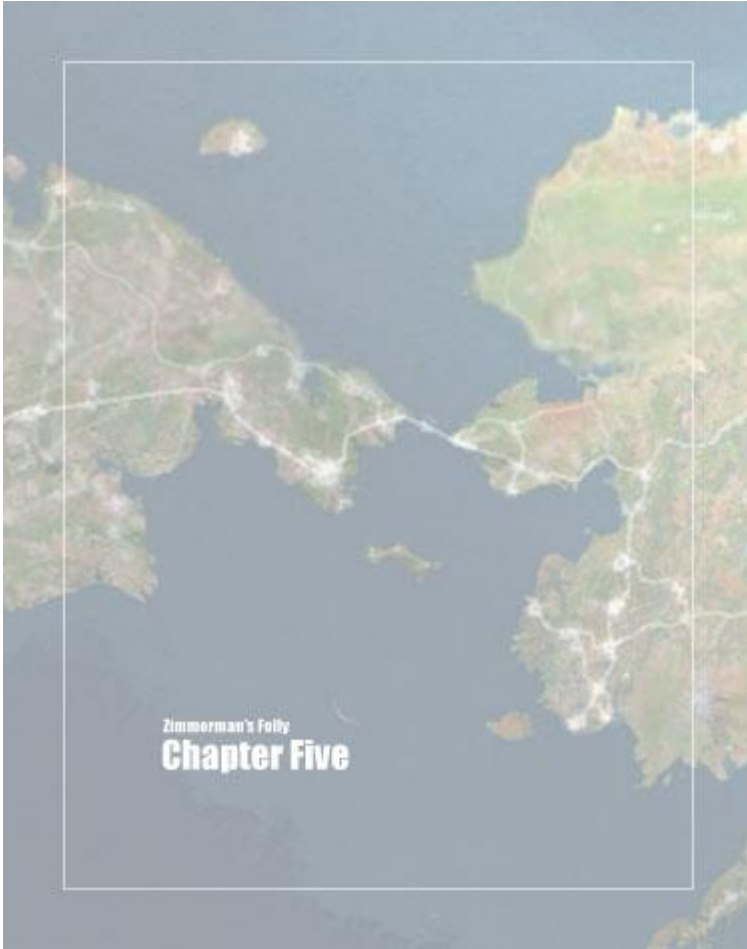
submersibles, allowing for a very short construction time. Zimmerman was appalled by the notion that worker deaths were inevitable on a project of this magnitude. Though the actuaries said it was impossible, the job was completed with zero fatalities. Zimmerman's Israeli engineer friends provided the latest in safety technology.

Graphic by Bob Kirchman



Elizabeth Zimmerman O'Malley would lay out agricultural greenhouse communities across the tundra.

Graphic by Bob Kirchman



1. *Invention is rarely created in a vacuum. 2. Always read your colleague's/competitor's white papers. 3. The flashy guy who gets all the big grants just sometimes aint all that smart, and 4. Persistence, hard work and humility is always a great combination in any situation." -- M. K. Wharton*

O *ur world of today revolves around things which at one time couldn't be done because they were supposedly beyond the limits of human endeavor....don't be afraid to dream." -- Joseph Baermann Strauss*

The building of the Bering Strait Bridge had involved the consideration of a dynamic design problem of epic proportions. Though investors thought Zimmerman's proposal a simple expansion of projects done elsewhere, it was in truth a project that involved new ventures into the unknown. Years before, someone had proposed a tunnel between Russia and Alaska. The fact that the sea floor itself was in motion made that an impractical solution. Add to that the strong ice-filled currents of the Strait and the vicious storms that sometimes swirled through and you had a lot of problems that had to be solved. Computer modeling always seemed to miss some subtle, but important part of the puzzle. O'Malley had given up pretty quickly on doing so, as Rupert had resorted to scaled down models of his bridge sections which he placed into the actual currents of the Strait. Detailed structural analysis on real models taught the designers far more than electronic simulation.

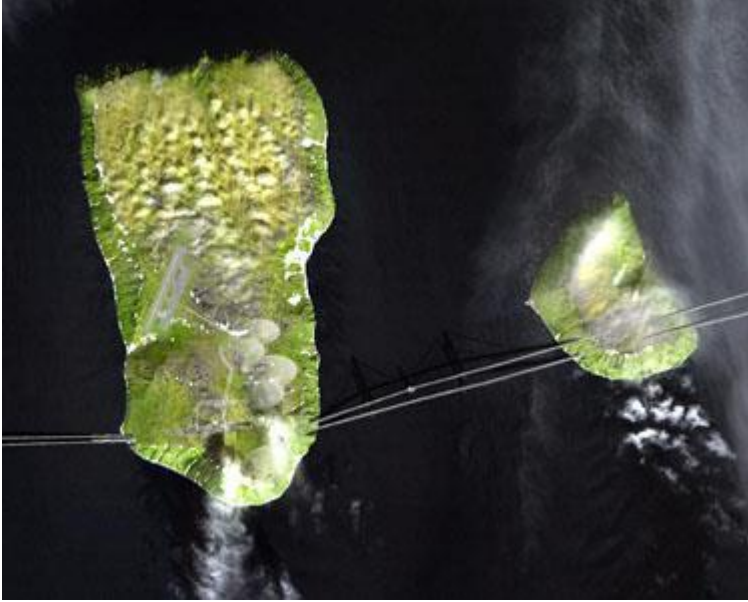
The design process had precedent in the United States space program in the 1960's. When President John F. Kennedy proposed putting a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth, he was using German ICBM technology and rockets that had about a 50% chance of actually surviving launch. American engineers had developed the new field of aerospace structural dynamics to refine the rockets. Their tools were machines that simulated the vibrations and stresses that actually occurred during launch. An engineer in Greenbelt, Maryland had actually created what he called the "Launch Phase Simulator." It was a giant centrifuge, which simulated the increased gravity forces of lift-off. There was a vibration machine in a vacuum chamber on the end of the centrifuge arm. Inside the vacuum chamber were lamps to simulate sun exposure and cryogenic tubing to simulate the cold.

The combined stresses that could be studied using this method allowed engineers to see what they were missing in analyzing isolated phenomena. American rocket technology moved forward to a more dependable launch vehicle. Rupert found some of the old documentation of this work and he, Martin and Elizabeth studied it to develop their own methodology.

Zimmerman had listened in horror to the broadcast when the space shuttle Challenger blew apart. A cold morning had caused an "o" ring in a solid fuel booster to compress, creating a leak where the heat of combustion caused the explosion of the fuel tank. Apparently the computer model had missed this. The old "bench-test" guys had been replaced by the "whiz kids" with computer analysis. One engineer of the old school had, in fact, tried to delay the launch. He suspected something like this could occur, but could only share his speculation. He was overruled and the fateful launch went on.

The shuttle Columbia was destroyed as her heat shield of fragile ceramic tiles had been

unknowingly damaged during launch. Re-entering the Earth's atmosphere, the breach in her shield had caused the heat of reentry to destroy the ship and her crew. Space flight was never without risk, astronauts Grissom, Chaffee and White had perished in a fire that engulfed their Apollo I spacecraft. Apparently a spark ignited their oxygen-rich atmosphere inside the ship during a routine preflight systems check. Apollo XI almost didn't make it off the moon. One of the astronauts had broken an essential fuse going in or out of the craft. 'Buzz' Aldren had used a ball-point pen to facilitate a makeshift repair. Without that pen the astronauts would have been stranded on the moon!



The Diomedes as seen in satellite imagery.

Bridge building itself had a long history of danger. Washington Augustus Roebling, son of John Roebling who designed the beautiful Brooklyn Bridge, engineered two pneumatic caissons that allowed men to build the foundations of the two towers. In 1870 a fire broke out in one of the caissons and Roebling was able to extinguish it. He did suffer from the bends, or decompression sickness as a result of his time in the caissons, forcing him to supervise much of the work from his home overlooking the bridge. The towers and spans of such projects were dangerous as well. "Bridgemen" at the turn of the century were known for reckless daredevilry.

Zimmerman admired the work of Joseph Baermann Strauss, chief engineer of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. [1.] Strauss' father was a Bavarian painter and his mother was

a musician. He grew up in a home that looked out on the 1,057-foot-long Covington-Cincinnati bridge. The bridge was, at the time it opened, the longest suspension bridge in the world. Hailed as a visionary, poet, builder and dreamer, young Joseph injured himself in an attempt to play for the university football team. Legend has it that he took in the view of the great bridge from his bed as he recovered, inspiring his future career. Strauss' undergraduate thesis, presented in 1892, actually proposed a bridge across the Bering Strait, connecting North America and Asia. [2.]

His magnum opus would be the Golden Gate Bridge, completed in 1937. Strauss was appalled that a project at the time typically lost one life for every million dollars spent according to the actuaries. Looking at a \$40 million dollar project, he refused to lose the lives of forty men to do it. Strauss put into effect the most rigorous safety code ever enforced on a project. He required all workers to wear Edward W. Bullard's hard hats, first created for coal miners. The bridge workers all received a modified version of the Bullard hat. Respirators, glare-free safety goggles and special hand and face cream to protect workers from the cruel winds were also required.

Asafety net was suspended beneath the roadway during construction and is credited for saving nineteen lives. Strauss even built an on-site field hospital at Fort Point. The men were fed carefully formulated diets, believed to help fight dizziness. Hung-over workers received a specially formulated "sauerkraut cure." Most important, Strauss strictly enforced his rules: "On the Golden Gate Bridge, we had the idea we could cheat death by providing every known safety device for workers," he wrote in 1937 for *The Saturday Evening Post*. "To the annoyance of the daredevils who loved to stunt at the end of the cables, far out in space, we fired any man we caught stunting on the job." In spite of such diligence, eleven lives were still lost. Most of the men died when a scaffolding collapsed and fell through the safety net.



Joseph Strauss' original design for the Golden Gate Bridge.

Though he did obtain a reputation for great safety engineering, Strauss failed in some important areas. His work prior to the Golden Gate Bridge was in building smaller projects and this time he may have taken on more than he could handle. His initial proposal was an awkward combination of truss and suspension bridge and the design was rejected. Undaunted, he hired Charles Alton Ellis to complete the design. Ellis drew out the graceful structure that was actually built. In Ellis, Strauss had his Martin O'Malley to round out his team; But there was a problem: Ellis was a serious engineer and Strauss grew impatient as the conscientious Ellis exhaustively checked his own calculations. Strauss had made Ellis Vice-president of the operation and had originally lauded the skills of his colleague, but there came a time when Strauss told Ellis to go on a long vacation. He then wrote Ellis a letter telling him not to come back. When the bridge opened in 1937 there was no attribution made to Ellis for three years of excellent work.

Strauss' show of ego might well have resulted in a tragedy similar to the 2007 collapse of the I35W Bridge over the Saint Anthony Falls of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During the evening rush hour, it suddenly collapsed, killing 13 people and injuring 145. The reason was an improperly specified gusset plate. The error was not found prior to construction. Ellis continued to check his calculations, working unpaid, and presented areas of concern to the Golden Gate Bridge design team. Needless to say; Zimmerman and the O'Malleys found this a sobering and important lesson. They came to treasure their collaboration and collective abilities all the more as they faced new challenges in their own work.

Elizabeth, Martin and Rupert simulated their own macabre set of 'occurrences' in an effort to ensure that the risks of their great bridge would be minimal. After they had constructed half-scale models of their pre-manufactured bridge sections and placed them in the strait they simulated ship collisions, terrorist explosions, even submarine cutting of the anchor cables. They built a shear-factor into the tube sidewalls to direct the energy of an intentional explosion outward, hopefully saving the structure itself. The trade-off was that a large collision, such as the one that occurred when Abdul jackknifed, also would break through the wall. They simulated the repair and replacement of damaged sections in winter currents. Their plan was to initially manufacture "extra" sections to replace any that became damaged beyond repair or destroyed. The "extra" sections would eventually become the twin span and then more sections would be fabricated on a "pay as you go" plan to become a third crossing over St. Lawrence Island.

Here Rupert looked at how the Bosphorous had been bridged in Turkey. The initial span, built in the Twentieth Century, had required heavy security in the volatile Middle-East.

Eventually a second "beltway" span sealed the reality that the Bosphorus could always be crossed. Elizabeth noted that people who enjoyed the prosperity of commerce were less easily radicalized. She planned to spread the wealth that resulted from her father's great work.



*When his initial design for the Golden Gate Bridge was rejected, Joseph Strauss hired engineer: **Charles Alton Ellis** to create the design that was actually constructed, shown here in this *California Highways and Public Works Photograph* from 1937.*



Construction on the Alcan Highway. The road was built in 1942 and completed within a year as part of the war effort.



*M56 near Yakutsk prior to being upgraded as part of the Bering Highway.
Photo by Andrey Laskov.*



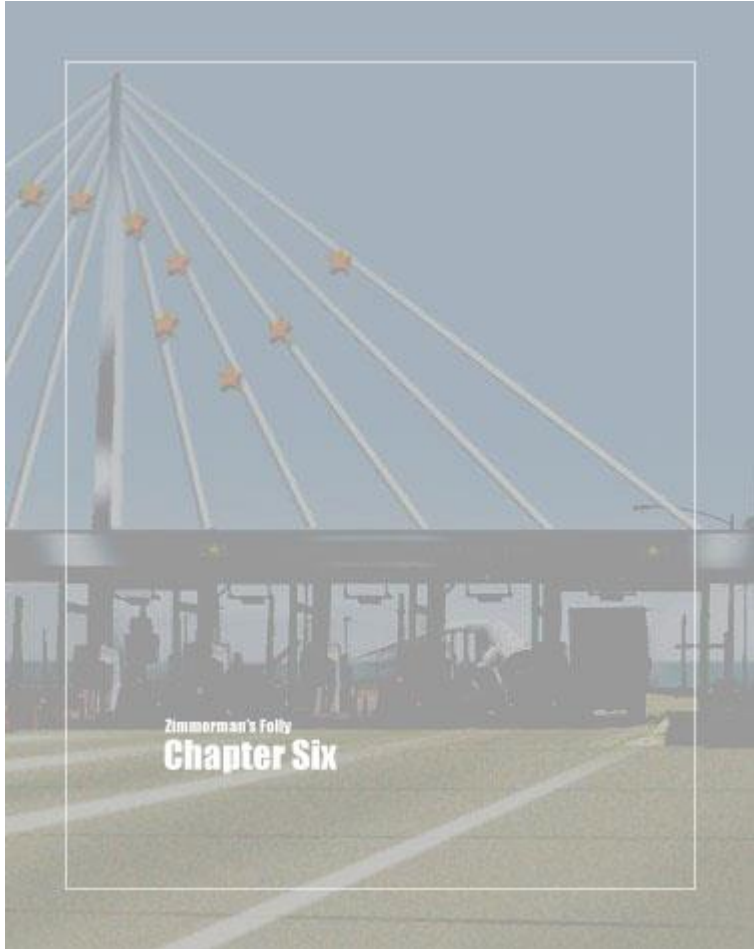
*The twin spans of the Bering Strait Bridge. The original span (closest) is the **Charles Alton Ellis Memorial Bridge**. The second span is the **Joseph Baermann Strauss Memorial Bridge**.*



Preliminary Grading on Little Diomedede.



*The 'Launch Phase Simulator' at Goddard Spaceflight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.
NASA Photo*



Is not this the fast that I have Chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger,

and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." -- Isaiah 58:7-12

Indeed, Rupert went on in his 'last letter' to praise Elizabeth. He was careful to laud the accomplishments of Anna and Sandy, as he understated those of his youngest daughter. Elizabeth had, on her own, begun to study the possibility of geo-thermally enhanced agriculture in the tundra of the autonomous republics. Like America in the Nineteenth Century, a vast new world was opened to the world's struggling masses. She studied how Theodor Herzl had envisioned the rebirth of the nation of Israel. Herzl had considered locating the reborn state in South America as well as in the land of promise. His novel, Altneuland, or Old New Land, outlined his vision for a reborn Israel. Here would be a nation that enjoyed the fruits of capitalist markets and freedom, yet cared for weak in the best of socialist intentions. Arab and Jew would work side by side and Jerusalem would become a modern hub of commerce!

Previous to pursuing the vision of Zion Theodor Herzl had even contemplated assimilating the Jewish people into Germany through a mass conversion. His creative and troubled mind journeyed endless distances to find rest for his people. It was not until the Twentieth Century, The Balfour Declaration and the reestablishment of the nation in 1947 that the vision of a Jewish homeland became reality.

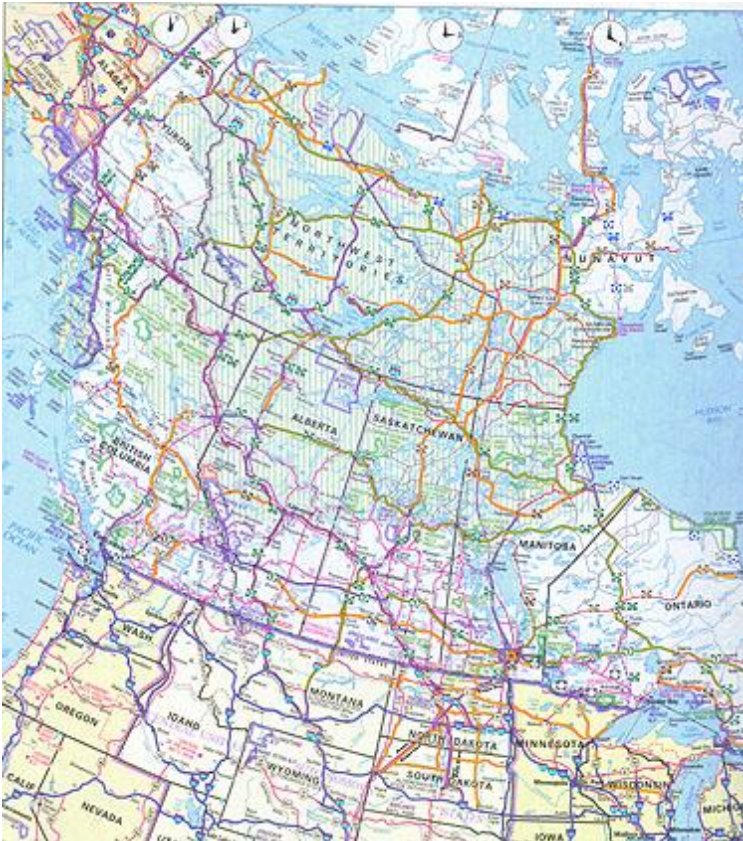
In the wake of Israel's establishment, her Arab neighbors rose up to attack her. Much of Israel's Arab population fled to neighboring states, hoping to follow the conquering Arab armies back in the wake of their sure victory! When that victory was not to come, they became permanent refugees... the neighboring Arab states would not assimilate them. They became the Palestinians. Elizabeth's new lands offered a new home for those in the world who desired one. Many Palestinians were happy to seek passage to the North where their children would have a sure future. Those who remained, however, became even more bitter.

Though the world often looked unfavorably on the reborn Israel, this small nation, the size

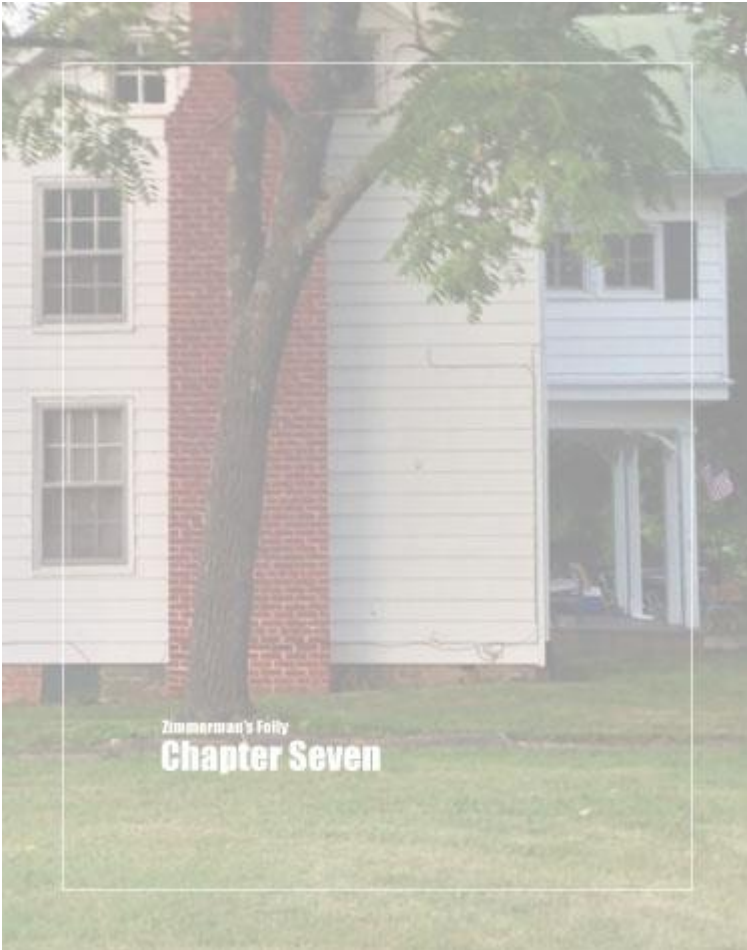
of New Jersey, became the world's 'Garden State,' exporting food and flowers to Europe and beyond. Israeli researchers led the world in giving sight to the blind and new computing technology to the world. Elizabeth found much support for her greenhouse vision in the Israeli research community.



Bering Strait Bridge Complex at Wales.



Tundra Farms in 2060.



Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones." --

Sir Winston Churchill

The more Rupert Zimmerman learned about Israel's progress, the more he was convinced that the possibility of Divine inspiration might actually exist. Portrayed by the world media as knuckle-dragging barbarians and oppressors, the people Rupert actually met there in his work were delightful and open-hearted. Even before the night he embraced his own faith in

the Divine, on a night that began at the Greene's home and ended with his prayer on the bridge, Zimmerman had been the guest at many a Sedar meal. Here was the story of mankind's greatest struggle -- that of exile and exodus, and most of all REDEMPTION!, all told through the medium of a meal! Giggling children hiding the Afikomen were immersed in the great narrative of their people. But Zimmerman began to see that that great story had a place in the greater human narrative. Hadn't Abraham received the promise that through him ALL the nations of the Earth would be blessed?

Haroset, bitter herbs and young lamb mingled together to add illustration to an old story.

In ancient times a covenant was often made within the context of a meal. Rupert's own redemptive story was now unmistakably flavored by sweet tea and macaroni and cheese. In the 1950's the American company Swanson created an invention known as the "TV Dinner." Families no longer conversed around the table, often "watching the news" instead of passing truth from generation to generation. Food was placed into individual compartments in a small aluminum tray, individualized for each diner. There were no more passed dishes. The family ate in silence as the television did all the talking.

Zimmerman remembered the great table at his grandparent's house in Virginia. The men

in the shop would come to the house for a midday meal just like farm hands had done for years. Laughter and conversation flowed as all took a clear break from their duties and shared the life of the community. News was what might be happening at Ruritan this week, a ballgame with sons or grandsons, the beginning of fishing or hunting seasons... all shared joys close to home. There was an old pear tree in front of the house. If the children picked the windfall pears they might end up in a delicious dish of baked pears... coming out of the same oven as the macaroni! Real macaroni and cheese started with a purchase of hoop cheese at the country store and ended with a delicious baked brown crust! One unplanned benefit of bringing the Greens to Big Diomedes was that Kris could bake this dish perfectly!

How little we cherish those essential institutions which we carelessly cast aside in the

pursuit of progress! The late Twentieth Century became the age of "heat and eat." Still, Rupert remembered fondly the "ice cream dates" with his own children. Their complicity in sneaking sweet treats into the house also resulted in some times of sweet sharing. Then there were the pancake parties where Rupert ladled the batter in a deliberate manner to create hearts and animals on the griddle for his children. He wished inwardly that he had done more of this. All three of his children were extremely creative. Had these mealtime memories given them the impression that this was indeed a good thing?

Pat and Rupert had rekindled those memories with Anna's first child. When the girl laid

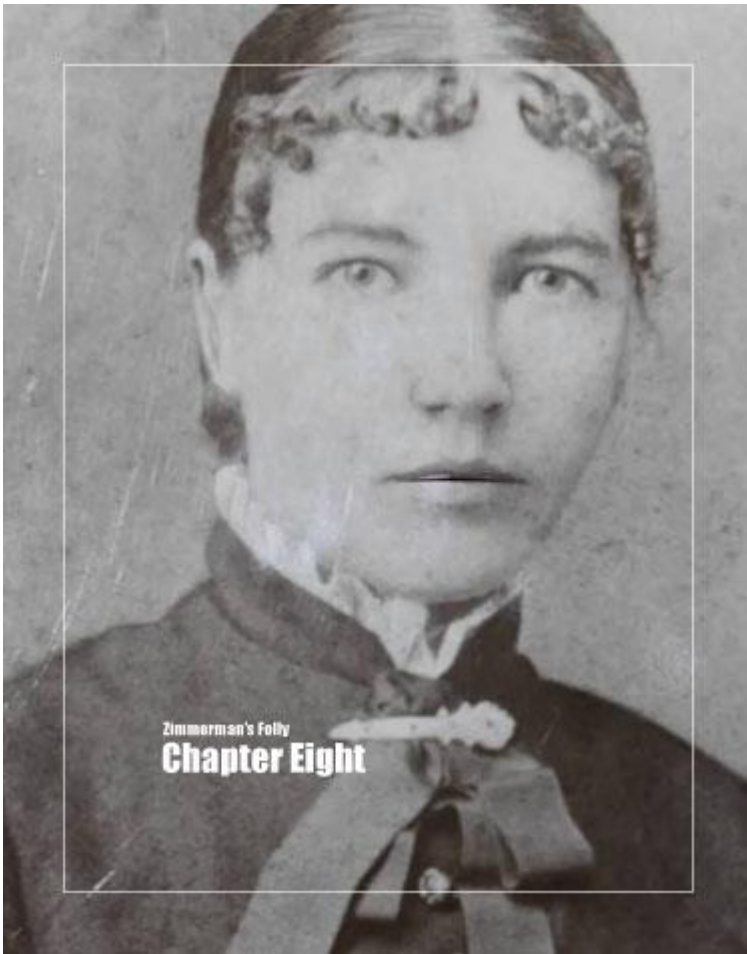
out a tea party, Zimmerman would phone his assistant and say "hold all calls." Somehow the man realized that children traded freely in the world of creative wonder. So many adults lived in a world of repetitive motion. The old man struggled to keep his own creative edge in his work and would often return to his studios from a "tea party" with renewed insight for his own work. Pat sometimes groaned as her husband felt compelled to point out the form of animals in the clouds. "You don't do that with your colleagues, do you?" she once asked. "No," he responded. Knowing that the truth of the matter was that he only did so with his most trusted ones.

Zimmerman had on his staff a number of young women who had babies. "Motherhood,"

Rupert asserted, "necessitated invention!" He made sure they had places with older ladies to care for the infants right in the complex at Wales but insisted that this "company benefit" extended to the privilege of the freedom to nurse the children as necessary. One's first bonding with another human being, Rupert noticed, was that of a child and his mother... a sharing of food that extended to the warm contact between two beings! If the complex at Wales was austere in its passageways, the childrens' rooms more than made up for it. Soft light played off of many murals and colorful furnishings. Older children could play under the domes of smaller versions of his biosphere. There were plenty of secret places for a child to hide in.

It was not all that uncommon to see a well-renowned engineer from Martin and Elizabeth's studios breaking a creative block with a walk through these "children's gardens."





This is no time for ease and comfort. It is time to dare and endure!" -- Sir Winston Churchill

There was no adolescent culture in Wales or on Big Diomed. If George Washington could become a surveyor at age sixteen, teens could join in the great work of their elders. Greene, the man who had taught Rupert how to pray, had preached his first sermon on prayer at the

age of nineteen! It was good! Zimmerman, as part of his own discipleship, obtained a copy of it. Laura Ingalls Wilder had taught school at seventeen. Building a new country required many hands, and people were learning again how to train their own replacements.

If one chose not to participate in the work of the Alaska Republic, one did not eat. Now

there was plenty of work to be done maintaining the ever growing number of roads in the North country and one could always join a maintenance crew to obtain enough to live on. You were free to move on and free to join in again, but only the disabled, elderly and mothers with young children could obtain government help. Most of the young mothers preferred the 'data processing' option where they got issued a small computer and were paid by the job. [1.]

There was no "under the table" economy to speak of, simply the realization that there was

a smoother entry level one with a simple yearly license fee so that all participated in the greater economy. It was something like five petrodollars, the cost of a sandwich at the service plaza. After you reached a certain salary level you paid that plus a small percentage. There was no bracketed disincentive to going higher. There was no minimum wage either. For five bucks a teenage Entrepreneur could start his or her own company and that fee let you have your own website. Reporting requirements were nonexistent until you made really serious money... and the handful of youngsters who did hit the ceiling wore it as a badge of honor! Since so few people received government assistance it was an incentive to simply hire oneself out to a greenhouse farmer for a while. The oil and gas leases on public lands actually resulted in citizen bonus checks. Alaskans had received these benefits before the Republic, but now the shares paid more as the public land leases exploded. Some of the energy profits were taxed to provide endowments to improve medical facilities.

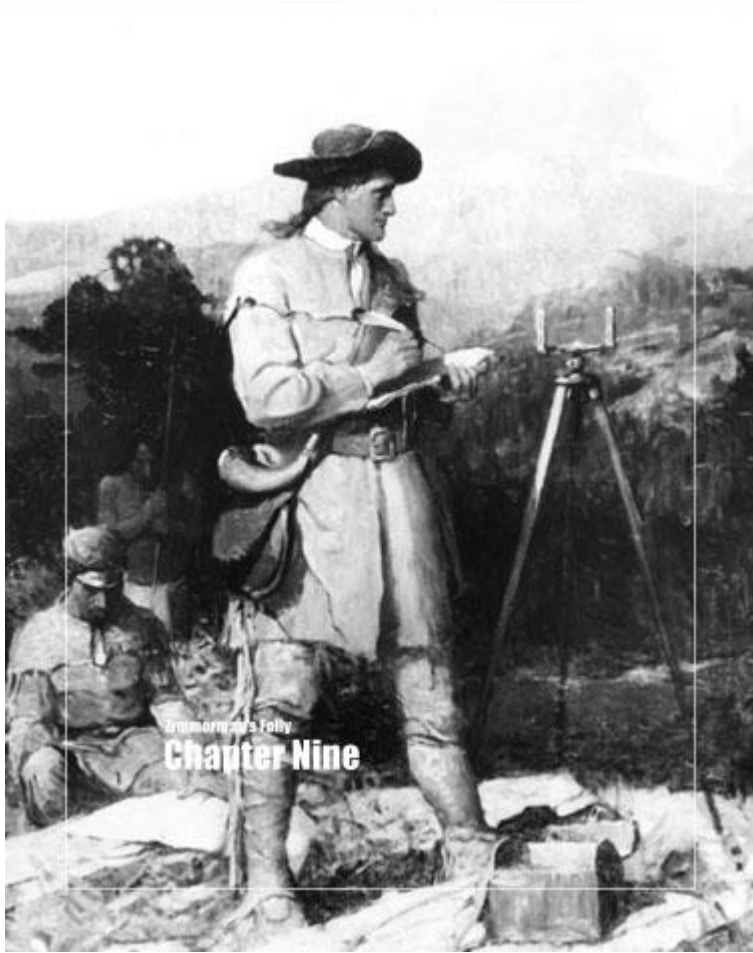
Healthcare in Alaska was largely a free market item. You would always get a "private

option" bill from the provider. Most people paid the bulk of their care straight out of their own funds and this was counted as pre-tax dollars. What you couldn't pay was financed at a fairly low interest rate, or no interest at all if you had minimal earnings. You could buy any kind of health insurance you wanted, but the most economical package was one that only paid for catastrophic expenses. Public involvement was limited to underwriting those unfortunate situations where a person's care exceeded any reasonable ability to ever be paid off. In the 'lower 48,' large hospitals were writing off large amounts of 'uncollectable' billing while bearing down on those who had some means to pay. The Republic stepped in to cover the catastrophic loss. Private individuals were expected to cover their care up to a fairly high amount but were extended quite a bit of grace and time in fulfilling that.

The end result here was that the hard haggling over what was 'covered' never really

affected care decisions between doctors and their patients. Hospitals with excessive costs might have to write off some care given now and restrict some procedures in the future. The resulting choice and competition along with the government's limited participation, far removed from individual incentive, resulted in lower costs and better options. Alaskans had never enjoyed better medical care. Alaska Petrodollars would also buy you care at Johns Hopkins or the Mayo Clinic in the 'lower 48.' These institutions fought fiercely to maintain their private options, knowing that the freedom resulted in the ability to deliver better care.





Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." -- George Washington

However (political parties) may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion." -- George Washington

That is not to say that the new Republic suffered no growing pains. Many of the Yupik had been effectively disenfranchised for years. In the articles of Confederation drawn up for the Republic the Yupik were simply granted proportional representation in the text of the document. An interesting scramble of "carpetbaggers" from the lower 48 rushed in to seek newly created offices only to run quickly afoul of the residency requirements. Failing becoming elected representatives, they took up new careers as lobbyists for interests from the lower 48 until hastily passed legislation banned the practice. Alaska, like Israel, had a multitude of interests represented in her assembly and that required building coalitions with other factions in order to obtain the required majority to accomplish anything. Because of the diversity it was almost impossible to seal the old "two party agreement" that had resulted in so much lack of real representation in the lower 48.

There was a Yupik Inuit Association Party, a Tlingit Seal Hunter's Union, a Russian Orthodox Society, an Oil and Gas Producer's Association Party and about seventy other parties in the legislature. Each had publicly stated objectives requiring some openness in announcing coalition creation. It seemed chaotic to some, but resulted in some solid discussion and clear consensus as opposed to strong-armed solutions or backroom bargains. It did seem to take a lot of time!

Zimmerman avoided seeking public office as a rule. He would quash any speculation of his potential candidacy by reminding questioners that he was still considered a war criminal by the government in the lower 48. His conduct in battle had been honorable enough, but there were those in Washington who would not readily forgive Rupert's role in financing the successful revolution. "How would you like your elected official arrested on a trip to a meeting in Washington?" Zimmerman would respond if asked to consider any elected office. He, Martin and Elizabeth had no problem, however, in offering their services to the advisory boards that crafted the framework of the new republic. In his "last letter" he was copious in his praise of the policy drafted by his two closest colleagues.



Photo by Kristina Elaine Greer.



An artist is not paid for his labor, but for his vision." -- James McNeill Whistler

Perhaps the most sincere praise Rupert wrote in his last letter was for those rare people of vision like his wife Pat, Kris and her husband, and his own extended family, who while they didn't build great, works like bridges, built perhaps even greater links to worlds of noble aspiration! Their lives were to him a continual challenge.

He didn't want to embarrass his oldest granddaughter, but carefully crafted his words so

that the young woman would have no doubt as to how much he loved her. Anna's oldest child was indeed the successor to Martin O'Malley as chief engineer of what would soon be THREE spans linking East and West. That this child had chosen to follow the path she did of her own passion was a great joy to the old man. Even more of a joy to him was the knowledge that he had cut her no slack in getting there. She'd EARNED her place. He was truly sorrowful that he could have no more interaction with her in her career. *"But, it is time for me to move on..." the old man wrote, "to a place I believe contains even greater wonder and inventiveness. I humbly dare to believe that I shall press my feeble hand into the scarred hand of the Master!"*

Again, I thank you, Jon and Kris, for your unwavering friendship in guiding me to a place where I could 'see' this Promised Land. I shall ever be in your debt for the knowledge of this place that your loving witness first made real to me."

The great builder rarely addressed the Pastor as other than Reverend Greene in public.

This slip in a letter was intentional. The man who had first come to Big Diomed to oversee the moral well-being Zimmerman's Folly had become his personal mentor in things unseen, and Zimmerman loved him for it!

Indeed it was Greene who had become Zimmerman's closest confidant as he developed new ideas in education as well as innovation in construction. Now, illuminated by the thought that Divine inspiration was truly available to mere mortals, Zimmerman pushed to see where that inspiration might take him. He set out to woo Pat to come to Big Diomed. Abandoning his Spartan quarters on Wales, he brought her to the Big Diomed community. Together they designed a house to be built by the craftsmen in Virginia and assembled in the little community. Their house was not all that different from the first house built on Big Diomed for the Greens. In fact, Pat "borrowed" many ideas from the original house. Rupert mused that the Pastor's wife would have been brilliant had she pursued a career in his own design department.

Martin and Elizabeth built a house next to Rupert and Pat's. Their children grew up in the full richness of a multigenerational family. The choir of the little church on Big Diomed grew rich with an ever increasing variety of voices. Rupert and Pat were there every Sunday, and they usually drove over to Little Diomed after services with their children to a place where it was Saturday, on the other side of the International Date Line. There they would

enjoy chicken sandwiches that they could not have had after church on Big Diomed. The restaurant chain's policy of being closed on Sunday was strictly observed... even acknowledging time zone differences! The residents of the Diomedes had some fun with this!

On warm Summer days the happy little party would continue on to Wales, and a day of hiking on Cape Mountain or along Kingigin. Zimmerman looked forward to these walks most of all. Even in his nineties he still loved to hoist a grandchild onto his shoulders and walk in cadence to his or her song. The tundra flowers were brilliant during the brief Summer. There was by this time a little reconstructed Inuit village near Wales and the family loved to explore it. Pat's heart warmed to the Rupert who had first carried their own children on his shoulders to the little log farmhouse reconstructed in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Waynesboro, Virginia. He seemed to have returned, only this time there was a mantle of peace that the old man wore.



Summer flowers on Cape Mountain.



Diomede Girl. Alaska Historical Collection.



Walrus Boats. Alaska Historical Collection.

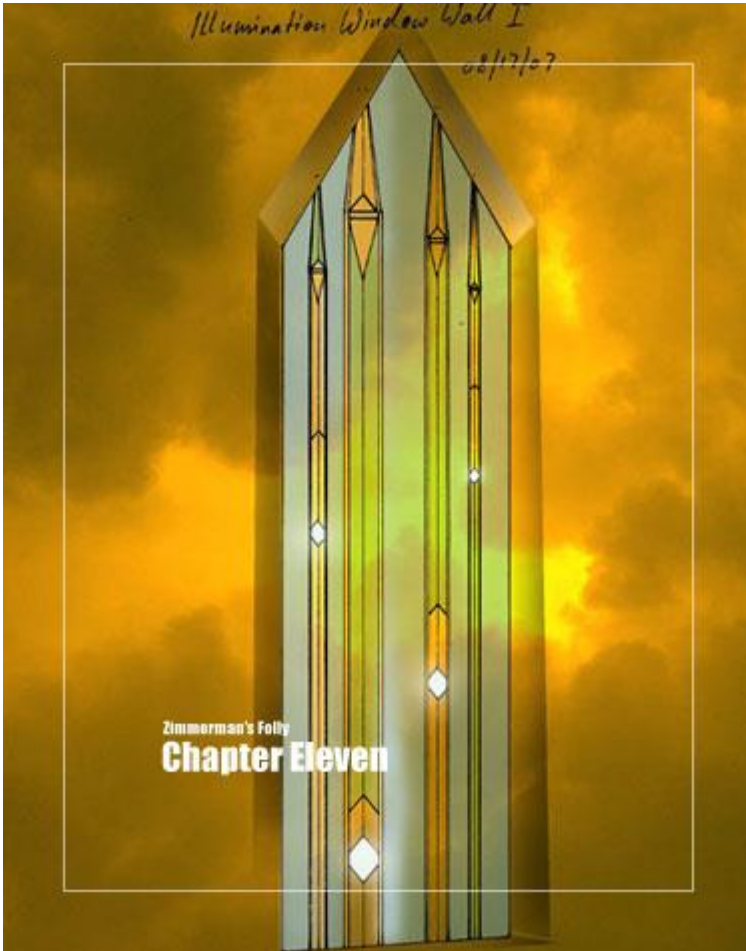
When the long Winter descended, Rupert would 'surprise' Pat with a Christmas present that usually involved a trip to someplace warm and sunny. One DIDN'T want to miss Christmas festivities at Big Diomede's little church. The Greens made certain that they were both beautiful and meaningful, but January and February the Zimmermans would leave the

work of the great bridge in the hands of Martin and Elizabeth as they visited places dear to their youngest daughter.

Pat and Rupert became eyes and ears for Elizabeth in their travels. Many of her initiatives to build a school or provide clean water began with a tearful story told by her mother. Pat never needed spend the endless Winter in the North country. She never set foot in the 'Labyrinth of Exile" again!



Photo by Kristina Elaine Greer.



Never, never, never... give up!" -- Sir Winston Churchill

We want to know not how we should pray if we were perfect but how we should pray being as we now are." – C. S. Lewis

Now the man who had brought them all here was gone. Greene thoughtfully fingered the letter, and reflected simply: "Here we have a unique sermon, spoken by a man who wanted in

the end to strip away all pretense, that if there was indeed any evidence of the Divine having transformed his life, you might see it. As his friend, I can attest to it that I have seen much evidence that Rupert Zimmerman was a man who's life was transformed.

There was one more thought to be read from Zimmerman's 'last letter,' then the mourners would drive out the Memorial Tower on the Eastbound span, where Rupert's ashes would be interred. The tower was a unique bit of architecture containing a pipe organ built with pipes made of glass! It was built by an Austrian master builder and Pastor Greene loved its pure sound. He often retreated to the memorial tower to play this instrument as he arranged his thoughts for the weekly sermon. The tower had been built to remember the lives of those who had died on the Bering Strait Bridge. There were even glass pipes of the organ embedded in the stained glass windows. The effect was a beautiful chapel where art and music came together in solemn harmony:

We will now proceed to the little chapel on the bridge." Green continued, "In it are remembered the names of those who died on the bridge and its approach roads. The first plaque recalls the name of a man who plunged to his death into the icy waters. I'll never forget that night, for I held tight to the man's friend, who was about to jump into the icy void after him! Though that man didn't escape my grasp and follow him... he took no thought for his own well being at the time. He, in that sense, was ready to lay down his life for his friend!"

So, I would have to say that TWO men died that night on the bridge, though that man was brought back from the brink and ministered to much by my friends the Greenes. He went home to love and serve his family. We know his granddaughter, the young woman who helped Kris paint the mural at the college, for she spent two Summers with us here at Big Diomedes."

But there was a THIRD man that died that night on the bridge... it was ME! That was the night I gave my heart to learn the ways of the Kingdom I have now entered into. I tasted honest prayer that night, and though there was no sudden transformation, I ceased to live as the man I once was... I now lived for a new Master... and He demanded my very life!"

The life you have come to remember today was, I hope, the life of Him living in me more than me living as I've always lived. George Müller was as bad a man as I in his first life, but saw a transformation in himself that led him to declare that 'the age of miracles is not past.'

Living in simple trust of the one who had transformed him, he built five large orphan homes at Ashley Downs in Bristol. I've visited them. History tells me that indeed the age of miracles is not past! I have been blessed to live in it!"

I will not tell you in a letter how to pray. For me it took Jon's patient friendship to bring me to that point. Around you today are many who have tasted the Kingdom I speak of. They will be more than eager to show you the full richness to be found there. Words fail to describe it. I've rambled long. I've taken more than my share of this day... so please enjoy your trip to the little chapel and if you are so inclined, make your way to Wales and hike on my beloved Cape Mountain for me!"

The little choir sang "How Great Thou Art" and the mourners prepared to drive to the memorial tower chapel. The Eastbound span had been closed to traffic for the procession, but people had been allowed to walk out along the shoulders of the span's travelway... and here they were! Men and women of the New World, assembled to remember the passing of one man. Truckers and motorcycle riders stood shoulder to shoulder with security officers and waitresses. Cooks and concrete finishers, steel workers and seminarians, pilots and mechanics, dishwashers and designers, mothers and babies, farmers and house builders all lined the bridge together. Old soldiers and Inuit communications specialists joined together with young engineering apprentices to line the path between continents that had changed their lives. Elizabeth sobbed unashamedly, knowing that her father's crazy vision and persistence was the reason they stood here. Indeed, without a visionary to build this bridge, there would be no place to stand! A new wave of emotion rolled over her as she realized that this bridge was merely a tool in the hand of a Greater Master... to build the work of the Kingdom that now her father had stepped into. She told the driver to stop the car. She stepped out onto the bridge deck and began to extend her fair hand to those in the crowd... old leathery hands, soft children's hands, brown, black white and all shades in between!, the warmth of human touch blessed the bridge across the Bering!

Martin, Kris and Jon joined her. There was no hurry to complete the journey to the chapel and the impromptu celebration of humanity joined together certainly was something that warmed the heart of the Divine.



Scuola di Atene by Raphael.



The name of Heaven should become beloved through you." -- Torah imperative, as related by Jonathan Rosenblum

Rupert Zimmerman stepped from a still pool into a little grove bathed in a golden light. The light seemed to emanate from a single point in the distance, spreading in rays that seemed to pierce through the tree canopy. The source of that light, Rupert observed, was moving toward him. The peace he felt seemed oddly familiar... like the peace he'd first experienced in the Greene's living room long ago on Big Diomedé!

Then Rupert saw the Man! He was as Magnificent as He was Fierce. He was Kindness

and Unbridled Force! His very being was a tensegrity of terrible forces that in their totallity created Peace! The builder of bridges fell to his face before his Master! It must have been eons he lay there. There was a feeling of overwhelming Joy and Terror, like the feeling Rupert had had long ago when he and a friend had taken a small boat out into the Chesapeake Bay only to be caught in a colossal storm! Heading the small boat into the waves, they had narrowly averted being capsized. Head into the storm, they rose and crashed with the waves. Rupert LOVED the memory of that day and the surge of adrenalin he had experienced! This felt wonderfully the same. Rupert had to steer into the force of this moment. He rose slowly as the Man touched his shoulder: **"Come see what I'm working on."**

Rupert noticed the kindness in the Man's eyes, which were brilliant to behold! He seemed

capable of holding storms in his hand, which bore scars, but the wounds in no way diminished the completeness He projected! He was surrounded by wonderful constructions, the hives of bees, the webs of spiders and nests even more complex than that of the oriole! He spoke to Rupert kindly: **"Friend," he said, "You were the tool in my hand to join two continents, but then you came and joined me in my most passionate work! Many have found hope in me because of your faithfulness."**

You came to me late in life, but you placed your life into my hand! I was able

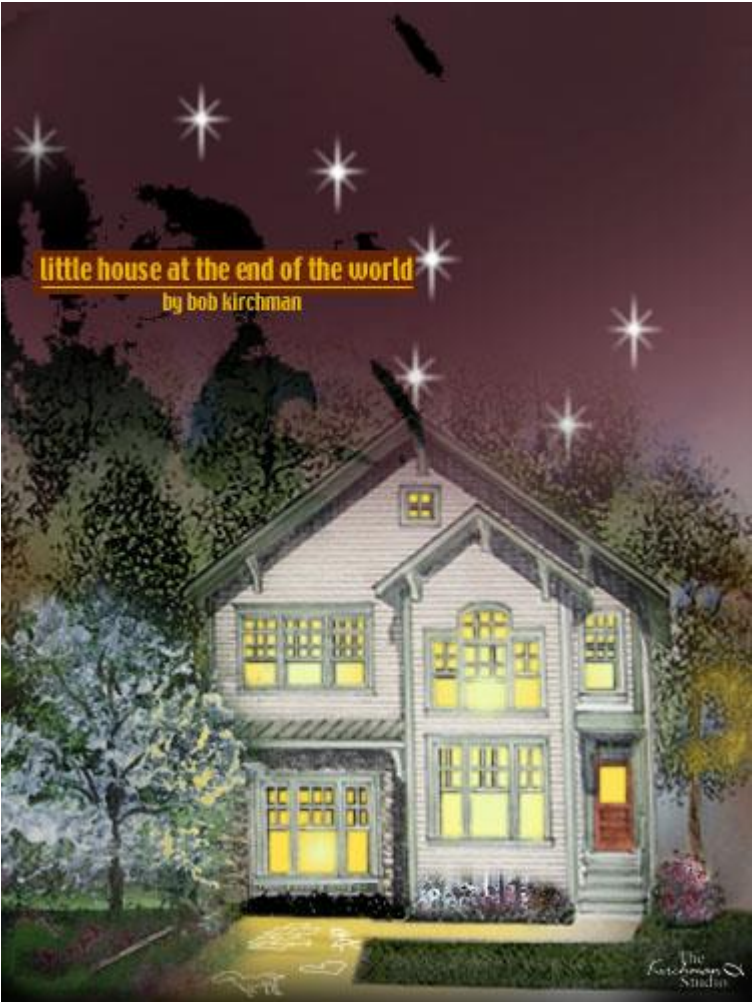
to work a great work in mankind because you surrendered YOUR passion to MINE!"

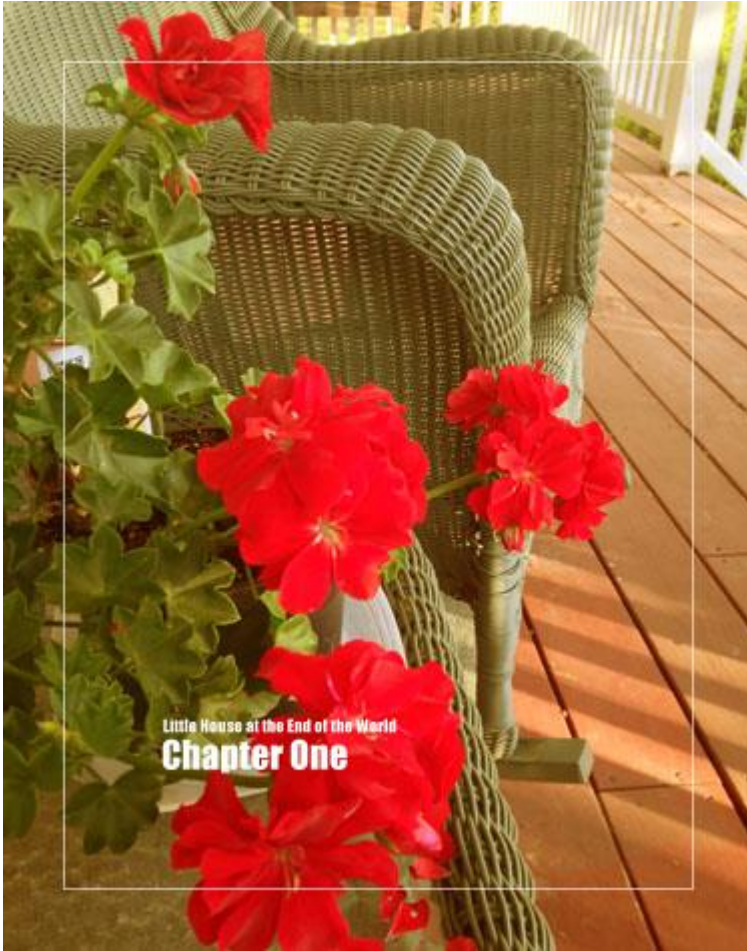
Come see the Great Works that you will now share in, because you are my

beloved child and I share much with my children!"

Rupert suddenly became aware that he had not spoken -- perhaps for eons. Indeed,

there was only one voice in that glade Rupert wanted to listen to right now -- that of the Magnificent One!





Joy is the serious business of Heaven." -- C. S. Lewis

It was one of those delicious lazy afternoons when all seems well with the world. The sun shone brightly into the little garden on Big Diomedé where Kris sat with her daughter and Kate enjoying iced tea and conversation. It had been over ten years since the time they had first come together working on Rupert Zimmerman's recreation of Raphael's "School of Athens" for the college building on the island. They had been joined that afternoon by Elizabeth Zimmerman O'Malley and the memories flowed like the sweet refreshment the ladies enjoyed from Kris' pitcher. Kris' house had been the first 'real' house built on Big Diomedé. Actually it had been skillfully made in a production center in Virginia and

assembled on this spot by craftsmen who had been flown in to train local Yupik craftsmen in the methodology. Now it sat in the midst of a fine little community that had grown up around it.

The hollyhocks were in bloom now, and their offspring, lovingly sown from Kris' pods, blessed many a neighboring garden in the biosphere which protected the little town from the ravages of the severe climate. Today, the little gardens seemed especially alive as hummingbirds and butterflies seemed to abound. "Why does this day seem so different from any other?" mused Kris. Surely it had to be the special visit from Kate and Elizabeth. No, the light seemed more brilliant. The flowers seemed more defined. An artist noticed things like this, and each of these women was an artist in her own right. They laughed that they should mount a show... calling it "Four Women who Paint" or something like that.

Do you remember when we first met?" Kris asked Kate. Indeed that was not such a pleasant time for Kate, but it had been the beginning of what turned out to be their incredible journey together. Kate's family had come to Big Diomedes while she was a young woman in college and she had been transported suddenly from her familiar world to the end of the world. Kate's grandfather was Joe, the trucker who was indirectly involved in the Bering Strait Bridge's worst accident. Though he'd pulled up short of the crash, he'd seen his friend lost into the icy waters of the unforgiving currents. He had gone home to his beloved Willa and with his severance check from Intercontinental Logistics the two of them began a new life together. Joe worked as a handyman upon his return and eventually became the maintenance supervisor for a small private school but he and Willa worked together in what could best be called restoring broken homes. Willa's devotion to Joe and the renewal of their love became a beacon to those around them. They did not start a 'ministry' or an organization. They simply opened their little house in Virginia to hurting souls... and Willa's loving mentoring became the ministry.

Indeed, many a couple found inspiration in Willa's merry eyes, which seemed to spread an infectious joy. She and Joe had indeed discovered something that gave flavor to their lives. Now Joe and Willa were gone from this world. "I wonder what Grandma sees in Heaven?" mused Kate. Her grandparents were such a part of her life that she still felt a connection with them. Kate, who had not only 'survived' her Summer on Big Diomedes, but now actually admitted how much she'd enjoyed it, felt a joyful peaceful contentment... like an afternoon fishing with Grandpa gave her. In fact, she now felt a twinge of anticipation, like she had as a girl the night before taking a trip to Grandpa's house! It was as if she would soon step into the old man's presence. She brushed the thought away, thinking her mind had simply crafted a sweet memory for her, but she couldn't shake that sweet feeling!

How unlike the emptiness she'd felt when she first stepped onto the island, when

Zimmerman was building his prototype community. The only internet access was at the library... or you could hit the "hot spot" by the church office in the parsonage. Kris had seen her there, sketchpad by her side, and asked her to help with some research for a painting she was beginning. Zimmerman had seen a nice recreation of Raphael's "School of Athens" in a college building in Virginia and he wanted a mural of it for the college he was building on Big Diomedes. Kris wasn't really loving the amount of architectural perspective involved but she and Kate soon reduced it to a fairly impressionistic set of shadow forms as they now worked on the problem together.

Kate now found herself involved in a grand work. She and Kris somehow were able to

match each other's hand and as Kate rendered innumerable coiffers in the great arches, Kris rendered the images of the great scholars... using some of her neighbors on Big Diomedes as models. Zimmerman had caught her at an attempt to paint the industrialist as Aristotle and made her change it. Still, Kris was able to hide Zimmerman in the crowd of scholars in the end. When Zimmerman finally discovered it, he was both amused and touched by the gesture.

Kate was 'officially' working for Elizabeth Zimmerman O'Malley that Summer, but when

Elizabeth saw the dynamics of Kris and Kate, and how they were bringing her Father's idea to life, she was more than happy to keep her on salary and loan her to Kris. Thus the two women painted most of the day and Kate helped Kris with the children's programs in the evening. Kate's nightmare of a Summer in isolation was transformed into a marvelous mentorship! She and Kris became dear friends. Kris' little daughter found in Kate a new friend! The Summer Kate so dreaded passed all too quickly and the ladies resolved to stay in touch.

Now their husbands were off on a private tour of the inner workings of the Bering Strait

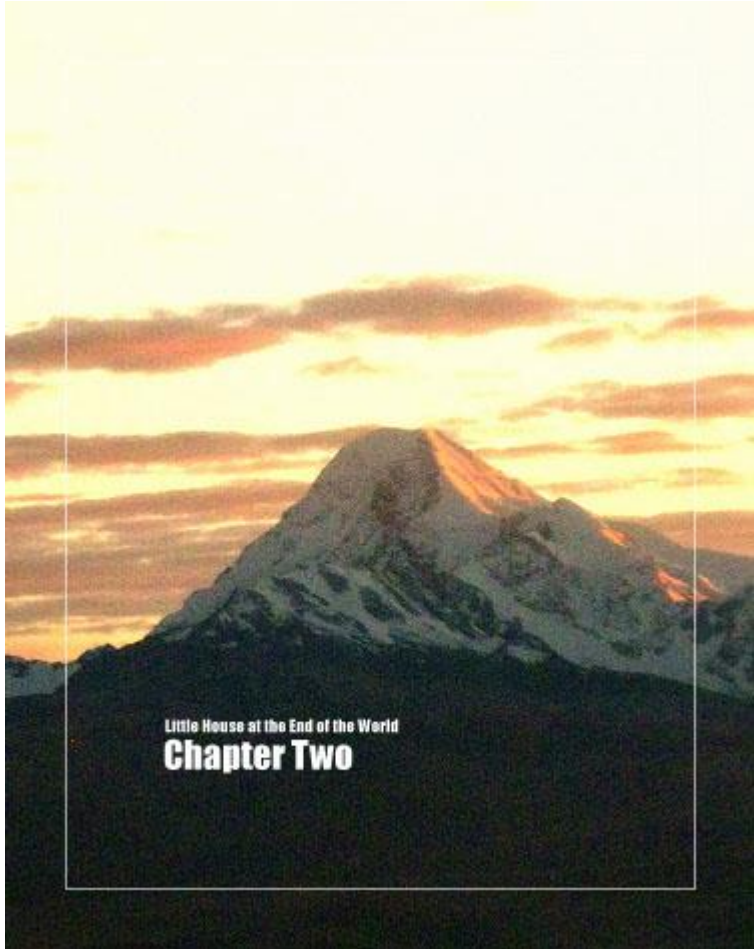
Bridge. Elizabeth had arranged for them to visit the utility tunnels and suspension towers. They were even going to descend into the bilge of one of the floating piers. Martin O'Malley's young protoge, who was now the chief engineer of the great bridge, was personally escorting them. They'd probably even get some fishing in. In any case, the men would be occupied for the whole day! There would be plenty of time for catching up together.



Scuola di Atene by Raphael.



Photo by Kristina Elaine Greer.



Those interested in the future of the country, not only from a national defense standpoint but from a civil, commercial and economic one as well, should study this matter carefully, because air power has not only come to stay but is, and will be, a dominating factor in the world's development." – Billy Mitchell

Elizabeth remembered how she rolled her eyes when her father decided he would buy the airplane. Alaska Air was always happy to allow BSB to charter one of their planes and they enjoyed pretty good access to the lower 48, even as the administration there still felt the need to harass the instrument of their restored prosperity. Zimmerman had been considered a war criminal and he wanted a plane with no discernible livery so he could return quietly to Virginia. There was a little airport in the Shenandoah Valley where he had friends in the general aviation terminal. There was also a smaller airport just North of it in Bridgewater where he could pretty much come and go as he pleased, and he did. The parka wearing Inuit man on Alaska Air's planes tail markings was just too much of a risk. Zimmerman wanted access to his Summer house with Pat but he had no desire to see the inside of a Virginia prison!

It is quite alright to own an airplane if you don't mind a kid throwing up in it!" Zimmerman had retorted to his daughter's well-reasoned objections. In the end, Elizabeth had become the biggest fan of the jet and her brave crew. She'd been visiting Virginia with Rupert when an old friend of Zimmerman's who ran a medical center in Santa Cruz, Bolivia took her father aside and confided to him that one of her staff in Santa Cruz was watching her little child dying. "If we could just get her to medical care in the US..."

But it seemed that all of Bolivia was on strike. The commercial airliner that flew in from Miami daily by way of La Paz was grounded. The airport was closed, her tower dark. No one knew when it would be safe to fly in again. Yet a beloved daughter's life was ebbing away. There was no time to wait if she was to be saved.

Zimmerman quickly summoned his crew, who were enjoying some rest and recreation at the resort tucked inside the twin ridges of Massanutten Mountain. They rushed back to the little Bridgewater Airport in their golf clothes and performed what has to have been the fastest preflight checklist ever. Fueled and readied, they flew through the night and pulled off a dangerous grass-field landing. All of Santa Cruz was on strike and commercial air traffic was at a standstill. Besides, the airport inspectors at Santa Cruz airport were notorious for slowing things up when you needed them not to. Zimmerman was a bit shaken when his pilot showed him the fresh bullet holes in his shiny airplane.

The little girl reached a Miami hospital just in time and had made an amazing recovery. Now she was the head nurse at the Santa Cruz hospital, where Elizabeth had helped her

obtain some of the machines that had saved her life in Miami.

Once Elizabeth discovered the power of her father's plane to bring healing to her friends around the world, she kept the little plane and her crew quite busy. You couldn't save every child who needed medical care, but you could do something! The person you helped, like the young Inca girl, would go on to expand the circle of healing. Because she didn't die, she took what she'd seen back to Bolivia!



Mission of Hope, Bolivia is an actual ministry in Santa Cruz.

The fine leather upholstery of the little plane soon bore the permanent stains of childish innocence. Rupert would often pull Cheerios and crayons out of the seat cushion and show them to high-powered world leaders as if they were trophies he had won in hard battle. Indeed they were.

The crew of the little plane became a legend... among the Alaskan bush pilots!, a group not easily impressed. When the crew returned to their vacation in Virginia after their diversion to Bolivia, they arrived early in the morning. They were far too excited to sleep so they managed to secure an early tee time at the mountain golf course. The pilot and the communications officer both scored under seventy!

At least the legends that grew around these men and women were akin to the stories that grew around Davy Crockett of old. Pilots are given to understatement, as everybody knows, but we actually have their scorecard from that day!

Kris and her daughter had their own story involving the airplane. The Greene's young daughter had become seriously ill without warning during her second Winter on Big Diomed. The doctor on Big Diomed examined her and said they'd need a specialist that could only be found at some place like Johns Hopkins in Baltimore... it was a dark day for Kris! It was also a dark day on Big Diomed. A cruel Winter storm pounded the world outside the biosphere as Kris made her desperate call to Elizabeth. Officially, all air traffic was suspended. Rupert's plane was at Wales, where the runway was long enough to attempt a takeoff, but the crew would have to agree to it. Zimmerman would not order these fine young people into danger. They would have to volunteer.

Zimmerman went personally to his crew, as the young family sped across the bridge to Wales. His pilots were the first to step forward. One was a young mother herself and Rupert asked her to fly the mission. The crew eagerly organized themselves around the young hero and began their signature rapid, but thorough, preflight checklist. The Greens were bundled safely aboard and Rupert himself stepped aboard as the flight attendants came in.

Zimmerman quietly ordered them to stock the plane's galley and leave. For the next seven hours Zimmerman himself would attend to the little family's needs. Rupert was no hero, he just felt it was wrong to ask people to do jobs you wouldn't do yourself. That is why, when his

pilot made her intent clear to go, Zimmerman made it clear that he would join her crew!

The pilot would have to take off blind, depending on her copilot to tick off the seconds as

she pushed the plane's acceleration. She'd have to lift the plane off the runway at just the right moment. The enhanced visibility technology and computer controlled takeoff were no match for the variable conditions created by such an intense storm. One needed the skills and sense of a Chuck Yeager and Jack Ridley to even attempt this. The wicked and fickle currents required a special touch and some intuition... and that was on a blue-sky day! Zimmerman's crew had been groomed for this moment and as they pushed their airplane into the face of the storm's furious force, their voices reflected their calm resolve that they were up to the task.

Zimmerman himself kept quiet during the takeoff, knowing his cracking voice might

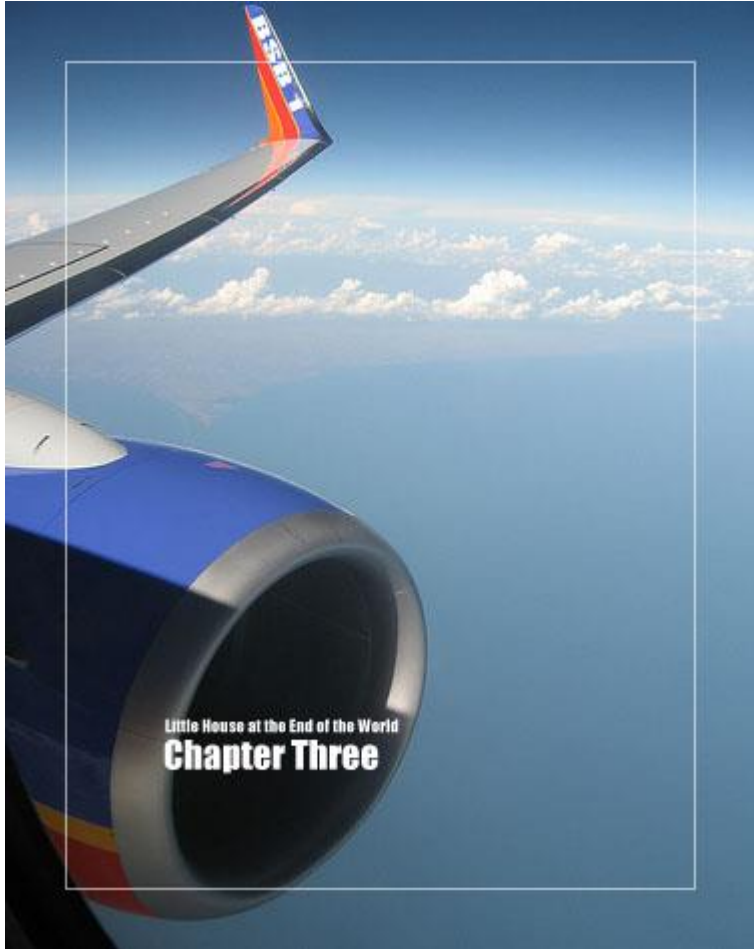
betray the fear he still struggled to contain. Though he did things some would call brave, he constantly was fighting the wounds inflicted by his overprotective father. The plane shook violently as she strained to climb above the swirling chaos. Thick snow blew by the windows in furious streaks as the aircraft flexed to avoid breaking, buffeted by the cruel elements. Kris' daughter unceremoniously threw up on the fine leather. As the plane broke through the clouds, Rupert unfastened his seat belt and grabbed some cleaning supplies from the galley. The poor little girl had been rushed aboard without so much as a change of clothes. The extra uniforms of the plane's crew would not fit her, but Pat's terry robe was a comfortable solution. "We'll go shopping in Baltimore." Zimmerman said softly. His mind wandered to a time when his youngest brother had hurled in the family car on the way to Luray Caverns in Virginia. They had stopped quickly at a J.J. Newberry store and bought a cheap little outfit for him. Rupert's mother would recall years later how that little outfit had outlasted many a more expensive set of children's clothes from Hutzler's!

Touching down for fuel in Canada, the crew quickly filed an 'official' flight plan into

Baltimore's BWI airport. There was no sneaking into Virginia now. Time required a straight-on approach. An ambulance was scheduled to meet them. They declared the medical emergency that they were coming for. No surprise. Hopefully the authorities would cooperate as they usually did.



Map of Alaska in 2060.



On a long flight, after periods of crisis and many hours of fatigue, mind and body may become disunited until at times they seem completely different elements, as though the body were only a home with which the mind has been associated but by no means bound. Consciousness grows independent of the ordinary senses. You see without assistance from the eyes, over distances beyond the visual horizon. There are moments when existence appears independent even of the mind. The importance of physical desire and immediate surroundings is submerged in the apprehension of universal values.” – Charles Linbergh

The aircraft was cleared for landing at Baltimore’s BWI Airport. An ambulance met the

Greenes and whisked them to Johns Hopkins. Kris' daughter had passed the hours watching the Disney 'Princesses' movies on the plane. Now she wore Pat's robe like a royal one as she was hurried off to Baltimore. Though the administration had tried to put institutions like Johns Hopkins Hospital under government control, the administrators of that institution had skillfully avoided it. Kris carried a sizeable amount of Alaska Petrodollars, handed to her by Rupert, in order to ensure her treatment under the "Private Option."

Zimmerman planned to remain on the plane and quietly slip out when they were no longer

needed. Unfortunately he had parted with his Petrodollars before they might possibly have come in handy. This was no small airport where Zimmerman-friendly staff ignored the bounty on his head. This was Baltimore Washington International -- thirty minutes from the nation's capital! Some officious little weasel of a security official ran the obligatory check on the plane's tail number. He was not satisfied with the Calgary registration and started cross-checking the recorded flight plans. Obtaining a warrant, he and a small detail of security stormed the plane on the tarmac. Zimmerman's crews were required to be expert marksmen... and women, but Zimmerman ordered them to surrender. No one should have to die when Rupert's surrender would end any need for force. Besides, Zimmerman knew the lower 48 depended on the fruits of his labor for their economic survival. Negotiation just might work.

Zimmerman was taken into custody and the plane seized by the IRS. A tax charge had

been fabricated by the administration in the hopes of just such a moment as this. While Rupert was incarcerated, Kris' daughter responded wonderfully to her treatments. Elizabeth O'malley provided them and the plane crew with commercial tickets home on Alaska Air. Alaska Air even 'loaned' the BSB a temporary replacement for 'BSB One.' Elizabeth's mercy flights continued even as her father languished in a US Federal Prison.

Elizabeth O'Malley pressed the Alaskan Autonomous Republic to pursue diplomatic

measures to secure Rupert's release. Zimmerman took advantage of the time to write her lengthy letters in which he mused on how quickly a great culture like the United States could be reduced to the state she was in now, unaware of her heroic past, anxious for an uncertain future, she had sold herself out all too quickly to the rhetoric of "Hope and Change." Indeed there had been change, but now things had become all the more hopeless! A great nation that had rolled up her sleeves and faced obstacles with Faith and Tenacity was now reduced to the status of victims who blamed others for their lack of progress. Liberalism had moved from advancing mankind's condition to warring against the noble instincts of man... and man was being reduced in the process.

Pastor Greene was concerned about this too. An interesting round of correspondence

between Elizabeth, Greene and Zimmerman ensued where the three thinkers opined as to how best address the problem. Zimmerman valued Greene's insight, as both men had a low tolerance for most of the bull-crap that passed as 'modern thought.' Elizabeth, who saw most of the world's suffering as a direct result of bad political choices, wondered at the revolving door of revolution, where the people overturned their rulers, identifying those in power as oppressors, only to establish regimes that were even more oppressive than the ones that they'd replaced. The great universities had been established to bring Christianity to the wilderness, but now they spurned their beginnings and promoted this endless cycle of violence. [1.]

A year went by. Kris' daughter grew strong and became the darling of the Big Diomedea community. Elizabeth became the acting president of the BSB organization in her father's absence, presiding over the reconstruction of the Eastbound span's 'blind hump' into a more gradual ascent and descent. The president of the trucker's association gave her a plaque, but the burly presenter's sincere bear-hug represented more accurately the drivers' deep sentiments!



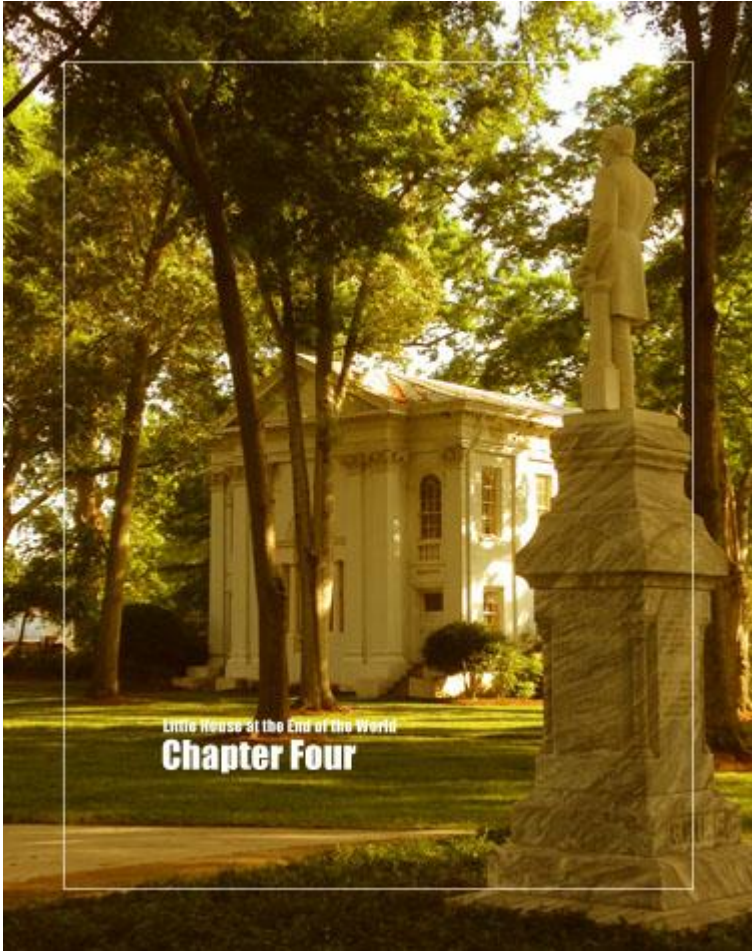
*"Eschewing the notion of high and noble ideals for humanity to aspire to, modern thinkers sought to recreate institutions rather than enlighten the heart. Their notion that 'man was basically good' and that the institutions were the problem did not resonate with a man like Zimmerman, who needed no-one to remind him of the dark places of his own heart."
Greenstone Replacement, St. Francis' Church, Staunton, Virginia.
Photo by Bob Kirchner*



*Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda, Clad in Scaffolding for Reconstruction.
Photo by Bob Kirchman*



Capitol Dome in Scaffolding. Photo by R. S. Kirchman



From these principles and our labors together emerged one of our country's great airlines and further developed our great heritage of pioneering. In the years ahead young, strong hands will carry them into a future which you and I, with all our dreams, can scarcely visualize" – Captain Eddie Rickenbacker in a letter to Eastern Air Lines employees

Eventually the administration agreed to release Zimmerman upon payment of the so-called 'tax liability.' The airplane and a sizeable number of Petrodollars would secure his freedom! No charges would be levelled against Rupert upon payment of this 'debt' and he would be free to travel in the 48 United States again. Elizabeth wired payment quickly,

knowing her father would be furious! She knew he'd rather rot than fund the lower 48's insatiable appetite for money, but in the end all were glad to have the ill feelings of the war behind them.

Rupert had actually been quite grateful to Elizabeth. Prison food was such that vending machine fare was fine dining in comparison. A man like Zimmerman fares poorly in captivity, his mind pacing like a caged tiger even as he seems to be calmly working in the facility's sterile kitchen. Pat made sure he had regular visits but she had to remind herself that he was a stallion fighting being gelded. He did seem to have grown calmer, though he still felt free to share strong emotions with her.

When he walked out of the prison, Pat drove him back to Virginia. He knew his daughter would take good care of things in Wales, so he and Pat stayed a few days in Lexington. Here in Rockbridge County the leaders of Texan Independence had lived before they went West. Taking one of Rupert's old Porsches, the couple drove through the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. Here was the site of the great Cherokee Nation, part of the heritage of Kris and her husband... now but a memory, but indeed a nation as great as the Yupik, who now shared representation in the Alaska assemblies. The Cherokee had built a modern nation in the midst of the white settlers only to be undone when gold was discovered in Dehlonga, Georgia. Alaska's Yupik had been quietly enfranchised during the war and hopefullly would never be removed from their ancestral lands.

Moving South, the Zimmermans entered the foothills of the Appalachians in South Carolina. Zimmerman wanted to see Abbeville, where the Confederates had drafted their 'Articles of Secession.' He was curious to visit a place where men had sought to control their destiny as a people... and had paid dearly to do so. The Porsche started acting funny, spitting and missing as he pulled into a little town that was mainly a college. There, among the signs for campus buildings, a matching sign directed you to 'Top Notch Auto Repair.' "Do you guys work on Porsches?" Zimmerman had asked. The owner of the shop not only worked on them, but was a fellow enthusiast, proudly pointing to his own. Zimmerman was impressed with this 'Academic Village' where a car repair shop rubbed shoulders with college buildings, even sharing their signpost! Professors frequented the hardware store and the campus seemed amazingly CONNECTED to the town that sustained it!

He found a nice little bed and breakfast and left Pat to 'pretty up' for dinner. It was growing late and Zimmerman noticed that some of the college food service workers were walking home. The college lawn opened onto the street where their simple homes were arranged like an extension of the academic community. He had visited the University of

Virginia, but was dismayed to see how Jefferson's Lawn had once opened to the surrounding countryside, but did so no longer. Stanford White, a New York architect had decided to 'improve on' Jefferson's original design by closing off the lawn with his Cabell Hall. That is where Rupert saw a nice rendering of Raphael's 'School of Athens.' It had been painted by George W. Breck, a muralist from New York in 1902. It was the university's second commissioning of a copy of Raphael's famous painting in the Pope's private library in the Vatican. The first, painted in 1853 by French artist Paul Balze was destroyed by a fire in 1895. Breck's copy was scaled four inches different from the Vatican original to avoid violating a Vatican policy prohibiting exact copies.

Cabell hall also contained a more contemporary mural painted as a companion to 'The School of Athens,' which followed the life of a student in the early years of the Twenty-first Century. Its painter, Lincoln Perry, called it "Student's Progress." The most interesting feature of the newer painting was a recreation of the open vista of the original lawn, now obliterated by Cabell Hall! The open lawn, revealing rolling hills and mountain vistas intrigued Zimmerman. He stood in deep contemplation on the Rotunda steps, trying to imagine the scene as originally constructed.



The Lawn of the University of Virginia originally opened to the surrounding community and countryside. Photos and rendering overlay by Bob Kirchman.

There was an inescapable irony in these walls. Historians tell us it is very likely that the author of American liberty had employed slave labor in the building of his university. Any remaining vestiges of this foul institution were nowhere to be seen, but the thought that this might be true troubled Zimmerman greatly. The more he understood his daughter Elizabeth's heart, the more he cherished her work to promote human freedom. Yet Jefferson was the one who had penned, borrowing from Locke, the description of "Certain Inalienable Rights." Years later the work of Abolitionists and later the Freedom Riders had indeed opened the vista of freedom to the children of slaves. Man in his folly needed a vision of himself perfected by lofty ideals as a starting point. Zimmerman was now convinced that the promotion of such ideals was indeed a worthy work. His own sense that he was inadequate for the work was a necessary admission, yet he could not allow it to become an excuse!

He'd once visited Nils Frederick Larson's attempt to recreate Jefferson's Lawn for a university in North Carolina. Larson had initially closed off the Quadrangle, as it was called, on all sides, modeling White more than Jefferson. Jefferson's buildings had colonnades and archways that connected the buildings. You could walk from his Rotunda to the farthest room under cover. Larson's arcades and colonnades did not connect... they were a sort of false promise... sort of like the separation he saw in the tribalism that passed for 'diversity' in the classrooms. Eschewing the notion of high and noble ideals for humanity to aspire to, modern thinkers sought to recreate institutions rather than enlighten the heart. Their notion that 'man was basically good' and that the institutions were the problem did not resonate with a man like Zimmerman, who needed no-one to remind him of the dark places of his own heart.

In the end it was Jefferson's Lawn that had impressed Zimmerman the most. He tried hard to imagine the original layout as conceived by the patriot. The Rotunda occupied a high place and two colonnades framed a view from the Rotunda steps of a manicured lawn flowing freely into the rolling hills of Albemarle County. A noble institution to address the frontier... and indeed a part of it at the beginning. The closing off of the Lawn bothered Zimmerman deeply. Here, however, in the countryside of South Carolina, was a campus that still freely mingled with the world it inhabited. Zimmerman was inspired.

In the center of a large grassy quadrangle. Zimmerman found a statue of one of the college presidents. The man, like Zimmerman, had been wounded in battle during America's Nineteenth Century Civil War. The Statue inscription read: "Citizen, Soldier, Educator, Servant of Christ." Zimmerman strove to be all of these, but felt woefully inadequate for the task if the truth be known.

The next morning, with his car repaired, Zimmerman continued his journey but the seeds of his next project were now firmly planted in his mind. When he returned to the Autonomous Republics he met with Greene to begin his plans for an institute of higher learning.



We'll be Friends Forever, won't we, Pooh?' asked Piglet. Even longer,' Pooh answered." – A. A. Milne

That is where Kate and Kris had become friends. The two women had balanced childcare and murralling as they worked on Zimmerman's recreation of "The School of Athens." Zimmerman could have hired any famous living artist he'd wanted to but on his frequent visits to the Greene home he was always delighted by Kris' paintings there.

If the truth be known, Zimmerman preferred the strong hand of a trusted colleague over the acclaim of the culture in choosing his partners for any project. Elizabeth and Martin had laid out the Big Diomedes campus and designed the modest, but tasteful buildings joined by simple colonnades. The campus was set on the edge of the island, perpetually open to the East and the rising sun. Since no classroom was bigger than a suburban living room, Zimmerman's Swedish friend produced the campus buildings in his Virginia production center.

Kris had even shown Rupert the painting she was 'hiding' as a discreet mural in the parsonage. The tradition of their faith was that they would often move on to a new field of ministry. One of Zimmerman's favorite stories from a childhood book was that of a Methodist minister who always planted a young tree at each parsonage that he would never enjoy the shade of. The purpose was to bless the families that would come after. Generations later children would play in the shade of a stately oak. The Greenes brought that story to life as Kris sought to do that with her murals.



*Inside Kris' house on Big Diomedes. The college is visible through the window.
Painting by Lola Dalton (the author's grandmother)*

She had initially protested Zimmerman's request that she paint "The School of Athens," but in the end reluctantly agreed. Taking Kate under her wing made the project sweet. As the two women wrestled with the folds of tunics and the contorted coffers, Kate shared the hopes and fears of every young woman. Kris was a wonderful mentor, sharing from her own story to encourage her young apprentice. That Summer flew by... the one Kate had so dreaded. It was a tearful ending as Kate returned to school in the 'lower 48.' She looked forward to her return the following Summer.

One of Kate's most voiced laments was that: "good men were hard to find in the lower

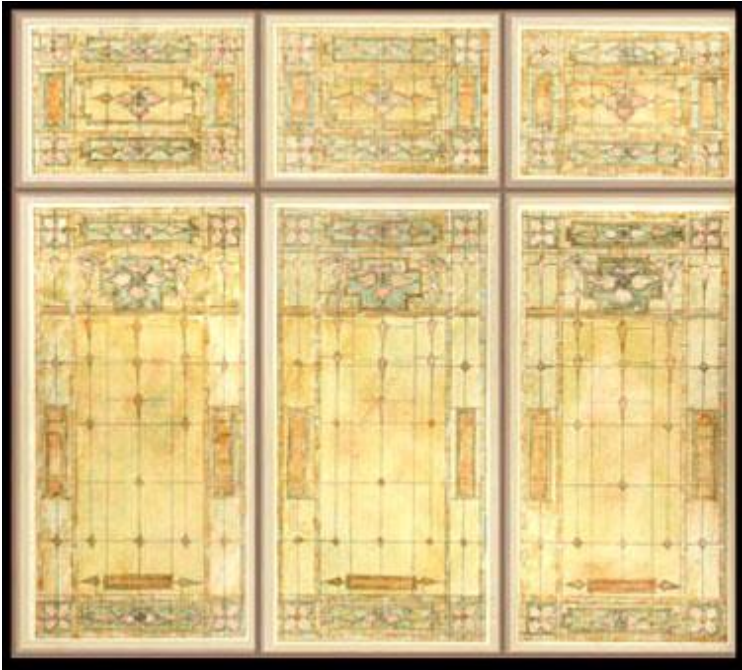
48!" With few meaningful career paths left to them, many lived in a sort of perpetual adolescence... like actors in a beer commercial, they played and sought 'experience,' but few of them sought significance. Encouraged by the Greene's love story, she had been given a larger perspective. Indeed it was the NEXT Summer that Kate had met her husband, one of Greene's seminary students at the new college. Here was a man who indeed quietly planted so that others who followed might reap the bounty... a man of the NEW American frontier!

His name was Joe, just like the name of her beloved grandfather! Joe had had an

interesting life. He'd tasted redemption after a troubled youth. He was a serious student of the Bible... but not as a detached interest. He'd seen it as a blueprint for remaking his life! He came to Big Diomede as a supervisor of the installation of the Virginia-built houses. Greene was offering some course that interested him and he ended up as one of the Pastor's favorite students. Naturally, the friendship began around the Greene's dinner table. When Kate returned to school in the 'lower 48,' the letters flowed regularly.

Kris, though she enjoyed new technology, never lost the sense of the flavor of a hand-

drawn card or letter. She seemed to carry over the sensibilities of a bye-gone century as she inhabited the 21st. How she enjoyed mentoring Kate in the art of high romance! Indeed, she was an enabler... she had snuck the colored pencils and deckle-edged paper into Kate's grandfather's room as he reconnected with Willa! Now she was at it again.



Stairwell window at the college. Painting by Lola Dalton



Some people care too much. I think its called love.” – A. A. Milne

Joe and Kate had followed in the Greene's footsteps, but their path had taken them back to the 'lower 48,' where they pastored a church. The great bridge and her economic vitality were indeed infusing something into the spirit of a hungry world. In centuries past it had been known as the 'Great Awakening.' Jonathan Greene and Kris had unwittingly followed in the footsteps of men like Jonathan Edwards. Indeed it almost seemed like the Divine's patience with mankind was finally paying off. The world in 2060 was a bit different than the prophets of doom had predicted.

There had indeed been wars, and even more rumors of war. The sins of mankind

continued to play out on the world stage, and many suffered as a result. In the Northern hemisphere, Elizabeth Zimmerman's geothermal greenhouse farms, populated by refugees of these conflicts, offered a strong alternative! If the truth be known, more people around the world were discovering the 'hope and a future' that Rupert Zimmerman had first tasted over the Greene's macaroni and cheese! Though the news media was not reporting it. In every nation of the world, little 'Priscilla and Aquilla' groups were quietly changing the world.

Indeed, on a lazy Summer afternoon in a garden on Big Diomedes, a group of ladies sharing sweet tea and sweet fellowship seemed to profess that all was right with the world. Yet, unlike the fat complacency of ages past, that had led to apathy and forgetfulness, they all shared that delicious feeling of anticipation! It was something like the feeling you have the day before your cherished daughter is given in marriage to a son-in-law who you yourself have come to love!

What could it be? The work in the world was far from finished, yet a new era of peace and prosperity seemed to be coming. With the world looking to the Northern Hemisphere for direction now, the Middle East was attempting to overcome her own convulsions with the establishment of the World Centre for Peace on the outskirts of Baghdad. The project of a young, charismatic visionary from Hungary, this could only help to settle the seemingly unending cycle of world violence...

But today, the light through the now mature trees of the biosphere was so... GOLDEN! so RICH! Not an ordinary day! And what was this? The MEN of these families were returning EARLY from their tour of 'Zimmerman's Folly.' That NEVER happened. The ladies had even put a later time on their reservations at Big Diomedes's Asian restaurant for dinner that night, knowing full well that a short tour of the great bridge never was. Yet, the men too seemed to sense the wonder of the sunlight... and the desire to be close to their loved ones. Think of Christmas morning or the day of your wedding... or the last bell before the first day of Summer vacation... none of these can come close to the feeling our little company now shared.

Golden sunlight seemed to fill the little garden now. The hollyhocks had never seemed so brilliant!



For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth all things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." -- Isaiah 61:11

The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow." -- Isaiah 62:2



K*ris vaguely remembered the feeling of floating... it seemed she was floating above her brilliant garden on Big Diomedea... then stepping from the still pool into a beautiful wood! Oh, the colors! This place was so new and yet to her it was also strangely familiar, like the woods she'd played in behind her house as a girl, but the colors were so deep! Somehow she'd always known the wonder of this place.*

T*he illumination of this place was like the first light of dawn. Golden light spilled into the little grove! Somehow the source of that light seemed very close... as if moving toward her*

to greet her! Her first desire was to sing, and sing she did. Her beautiful voice filled the little grove. Her song seemed to add color to the place, and indeed as she sang flowers and brilliant leaves seemed to come into being! She was aware now that she was singing harmony to someone else's beautiful song! There He stood! A Man so magnificent that He appeared to be the Force that illuminated this world! Indeed He WAS! He finished His song and greeted her:

W*ell done!, good and faithful servant! You were my light in the world you*

have come from, now you shall be called..." and he spoke a name so wonderful that we may not speak it here, but it loosely translates as 'Daughter of the Morning Star.' "Daughter, come and see what I'm working on!" He seemed eager to show her the inner secrets of His Creation, and indeed He was. But as she stepped into this world of wonder she realized that she was not alone! Indeed her husband and her brother, who shared the same name had been singing her song as well. The man who had been her partner in life and the brother she had lost in childhood now stood embracing her in the presence of the Magnificent One!

T*ime is not the same in this world and for what might have been eons the little family*

shared joys that we can only imagine, since they are private to them, but just imagine the best Christmas ever when some favorite relative showed up unexpectedly and the house was filled with joy, laughter and forever memories! Yes, the smell of wonder that seemed to spill forth when a beloved and magical aunt opened her suitcase... those imprinted joys of childhood that are never forgotten!; these are but a hint of what joys our travelers now savored! Oh, how the circle grew bigger as grandparents and others joined the happy group!

K*ris would always remember a couple of wonderful things about this moment, as if she*

was uniquely created to notice them. First of all the eyes of the Magnificent One were seemingly made up of every color in the rainbow... and more colors that are beyond the ability of eyes in this present world to see at all! If Kris could have seen her own eyes now she would have seen that the beautiful green of them had been joined by all those colors as well! Her eyes were a mirror of the Master's! Now she noticed that when her loved ones drew closer to the Redeeming One, they seemed to grow younger! Now she came to the joyous realization that in the presence of the Magnificent One, she herself became as a little child. She lost no knowledge or wisdom in doing so. In fact, one only GAINED wisdom as one came closer to His presence!

S*he thought of people she'd met who'd seen and shared visions and dreams of this place.*

An Egyptian woman had said that Jesus was surrounded in Heaven by children! Now Kris saw how this could be as another person, who had died and been revived as a child had said that Heaven was populated by people who appeared to be in the prime of their young adulthood. Kris had once painted a mural on a church wall called 'Journey to Jesus.' In it children from around the world approached the Saviour in their native costumes. Now it seemed that Kris' painting had come to life. Young and brilliant, from every nation, they came to greet... or more correctly, to be greeted by the Magnificent One! Now she saw that this vision was indeed a reality! She hadn't noticed the wider world before, but now she saw the full sweep of the wonderful new world.

When Kris had painted her mural, a hallway had forced a break at the Bering Strait. In her lifetime she'd seen herself transplanted to the place where that divide had been bridged. Now mankind joined together, with no seas to separate them, in the presence of the Magnificent One!

There were others that Kris recognized as well. Abdul, the handsome Turk, walked with his wife and his sons and daughters. Rupert, Pat, Elizabeth and Martin strolled through the wood. Elizabeth joyfully pointed out new wonders as they walked! Each of them greeted Kris with the deep warmth one has for the teacher who has opened new vistas to them! Here were Willa and Joe, with their loved ones strolling through what could only be called a grove of hollyhocks... or were they hibiscus? The flowers were ENORMOUS! Willa carried a smaller one... brilliant blue, picked for her especially by Joe, who knew she loved that color. Butterflies and hummingbirds, some more brilliant than any ever seen on the old Earth, abounded here. Joe's granddaughter Kate seemed to be their family's guide through this wonderland. They each embraced Kris warmly when they spotted her. Each embrace seemed tied to the Magnificent One's blessing: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Kris' daughter and Kate, who had painted Zimmerman's reproduction of the 'School of Athens' together with her joined arms with Kris and together they shared the ongoing discovery of new wonders.

Some theologians will likely have problems with the notion that there are people, with arms locked, SKIPPING together in Heaven. I offer them no apologies, for the three women in our story were most assuredly doing just that. For their comfort it might be best to omit the description of some of the more magical creatures as well. It is safe to say the three women had come pretty close to describing them in their childhood sketchbooks! Now they patted their noses! All the while they recognized and called to friends they had known in the old world. They called to them as well. Kate, Kris and Kris' daughter were caught up in an ongoing and glorious reunion.

It is worth mentioning at this point that these are the names they were known by on the

*old Earth. Kris called them by names that seemed to overflow with some deep knowledge of the Magnificent One! Somehow she knew these names, though she'd never been told them. Women she'd first met as tough truck stop workers now gently embraced her with their loved ones and she addressed them with similar holy names! Families born of redeemed lives eagerly embraced the instrument of their redemption! Also, it is worth noting that Willa, who had lovingly introduced the World Unseen and the Magnificent One to scores of preschool children was also one of the few like Kris and her husband who heard the commendation; **"Well done, good and faithful servant."***

In fact it was Willa who, if one bothered to count (and in this new world you don't), received the most and the most sincere embraces. She instantly remembered the faces of children she'd taught in her first fourth grade class in rural Virginia. Now seeing them as grown men and women, she nonetheless recognized them instantly and knew their new and holy names. Their wives and children also had to embrace the one who the Magnificent One had used to breathe His life into their families. There were parents and grandparents too. Her love was the unspoken sermon that won their hearts. There were the twins she had known as Anthony and Antinio, though she called them now by new names... once mischievous children, now strong and brown young men! Indeed they were son's of the Magnificent One!, captured by His love as seen in the vessel of their slender young teacher! Joe was caught up in the wonder of the stories that sprang like fruitful branches from the life of his wife. It did not matter to him that he did not have so many as he immersed himself in the joy of learning hers. Joe did see Chris. Though neither of them was wearing an 'Intercontinental Logistics' shirt with the name embroidered on it anymore, they needed no one to tell them the NEW names by which they greeted each other. Chris could argue all he wanted with Joe's words and thoughts, and he could poke holes in Joe's failures to live up to what he professed to believe, but he was hard pressed to try and explain away the way Joe was sustained by WHO he believed in. In the end that was what Chris knew was real as his rig plunged into the icy waters of the Bering Strait. Both men embraced Abdul when they saw him. The young Turk had hungered for what he saw in men like Joe. He had endured the withdrawal of his family and threats on his life to find it. He had had dreams of this place, and the Man who gave it life. He had been blessed with a lovely wife and children... who walked with him now in this garden. They had suffered much and died at the hands of those who opposed the Kingdom they now knew as their home.

One often wondered what you remembered in Heaven and what you forgot. Now it was clear that knowledge had only GROWN. Knowledge of the Magnificent One filled places in your being that you didn't know needed to be filled. Indeed one could remember as but a cloudy dream, things from the past. Earth had been remade in a fiery rebirth. One knew that, but it was rather like the time Zimmerman had read the words 'Citizen, Soldier, Educator' on that statue in a college quadrangle. The man so referenced had also lost a leg in battle, but here on the quadrangle there was no smoke, no pain, no blood, only the peaceful light through the trees and the memory of a life that had been lived... no man's life is totally well-lived, but that is the part that remains vivid in the memory. In fact, Kris saw

this man and Rupert strolling together in a deep and animated discussion. It reminded her a little bit of the dialogue that had long gone on between Rupert and her husband. The difference was that now Zimmerman wore no anxiety and suffered no torment in the process. The man who inwardly had struggled so hard to find his place in the world seemed quite content and at home in the world he now occupied.

History was remembered, but the Master of History had made it His Story. There were indeed some who were not here that one had known in the Old Earth. Their lives were not forgotten, but they were remembered in the context of the Magnificent One's patience, **"Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** Indeed, one was aware of how the Magnificent One had wooed them. The Magnificent One wiped away tears; and His presence so filled you, that somehow you were made whole.

But now something new was about to happen. **"Come!"** said the voice Kris had first heard joined with her in song. Now on the Hillside of a New Earth, all were gathered as the Great Jerusalem came down to join the Earth... **"as a bride adorned for her Husband."**

Behold, I make all things new."

Now that light that had first filtered through the trees was seen to have its origin from within the Great Jerusalem that descended. If you think of the finest feast of celebration you have ever enjoyed, the best family or church picnic on a beautiful day; you will come closer, but nowhere close to the feeling of this time when mankind sat down to enjoy a shared meal with the Magnificent One at the end of the world... or was this the BEGINNING?, yes, I believe that is a more truthful observation; and that, dear reader, is the one I will leave you with



Oriental Poppy. Photo by Kristina Elaine Greer



Hibiscus. Photo by Kristina Elaine Greer

In Isaiah 60 and in Revelation 21 Believers look to a New Heaven and a New Earth where a Heavenly Jerusalem descends to join the Earth. Here is a Kingdom that needs no temple, needs no sun to light it, for G-d Himself is the force that illuminates it!

And I saw a new Heaven and a new earth: for the first Heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from G-d out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I

heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of G-d is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and G-d himself shall be with them, and be their G-d." -- Revelation 21:1-3



Journey to Jesus, a mural depicting the nations coming to Jesus in the New Heaven and New Earth described in Revelation 21. Mural by Kristina Elaine Greer and Bob Kirchman

Our Christian hope is that we're going to live with Christ in a new Earth, where there is not only no more death, but where life is what it was always meant to be." -- Timothy Keller.



The hope of Heaven and New Earth.

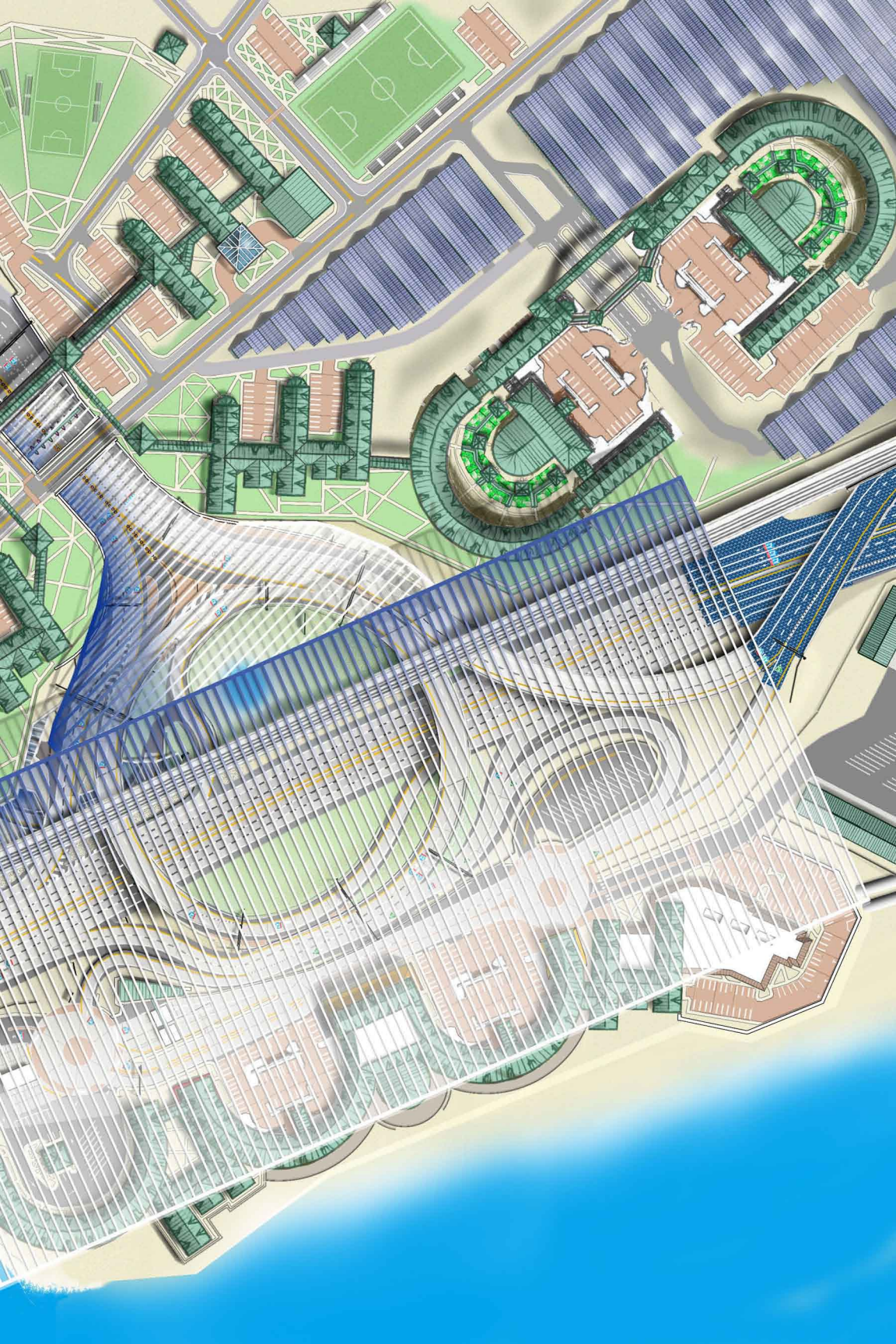




Photo by Kenneth Paulano

The author painting a mural of 'Heaven's Hollyhocks' for a beauty salon in Charlottesville, Virginia.

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