

Feeling Life

By Pete Clark

Yes, I know you have to be weird to like insects, unless you are an entomologist, and I don't particularly care for bugs. However I am concerned about the results of research on declining insect populations done by the Krefeld Entomological Society near Dusseldorf, Germany. They have discovered the number of flying insects in northern Germany has dropped 75% over the last thirty years. The researchers have no clear answer for why this has happened. They note the loss of natural habitat to sanitized sterile farmland for crop production and the possibility of neurotoxins leaching into the soil from seeds coated with insecticides. Our food chain begins with insects. Think about it. If the lowest rung of our food chain disappears, the rest of it will collapse like a California hillside in heavy rain.

I am a sucker for small animals, especially young small animals. In the spring of 1980 I was helping set two-pole, wood structures, part of an electricity transmission line going into Smokey Hill Substation east of Aurora, Colorado. During the process of rigging the structure for lifting and setting, I noticed a lost young cottontail shaking with fear in the middle of, what to it, had to be mass confusion. The little rabbit was in great danger from a crew intent on the job to be done and there was the possibility that someone might kill it just for the fun of doing so. I picked the wee thing up and carried it out into the prairie where it had a better chance for survival.

Private prisons are wrong. CEO's should not become fabulously wealthy from the suffering of people who have made mistakes or deliberately broken the law. They are still human beings and should not be fed rotten food and forced to endure other humiliations and abuses. The current crackdown on immigration violations are filling the beds of federal contract prisons at great expense to American taxpayers. The few journalists who have managed to infiltrate private prison facilities have brought out horrendous stories of cruelty and persecution. These conditions exist because the Department of Justice is either unable or unwilling to provide oversight for the system of privately run federal prisons. To paraphrase a line from a popular movie of years gone by, "People with money rule, the rest of us drool."

I have a soft spot for cats of all varieties. One of my favorite things to do is to go to the Dumb Friends League, pet stores or the Zoo to look at cats. If I could, I would take all of the cats seeking adoption home with me, but I can't, not even one. I adopted Harry in early May after Cheetah Cat succumbed to cancer in April. Harry is a great friend and companion, but I still feel for those who wait for a human to choose them. The best I can do for them is to donate money for their food.

Many things move me throughout each day, but watching the sun sink behind the Shining Mountains of Wyoming, with cumulus bases glowing from light pink to the deep red of iron infused clay and a light purple haze blanketing the plains spreading away from the mountains, is like seeing heaven on earth.