

Guarding the Gate

By Pete Clark

My comfort zone depends on what I am doing at any given time. For instance, whether or not I am driving along the Alameda Speedway or cruising down Dayton Street, for safety's sake I want the vehicle behind me to stay back at least one car length for every ten miles per hour of our rate of travel. That doesn't happen, at least not in the Denver Metropolitan Area. Everyone seems to be in a headlong rush to be on time without the inconvenience of departing early to allow enough sane travel time. A few days ago I was traveling south on Dayton when the light at Mississippi flashed yellow. I stopped and was almost rear ended by the man behind me who apparently believed that I was with him in his disregard for traffic laws and would run the light. He sat back there shaking his head until the light returned to green.

When I am out and about I strongly prefer not to be surrounded by a crowd. Herd mentality can set in to a group of people, making them homogenous but unpredictable. Will they stop and aimlessly mill around waiting for an event or apparition or will they be spooked by a loud, misidentified sound or a perceived threatening scene and stampede? One never knows. Distance kept is distance safe. I tend to walk alone, saying hello to any exercising dogs I may meet on the street with an occasional nod to their caretakers.

I no longer have a front porch or a back patio. About my only option for relaxing in what now passes for fresh air is to sit on a bench facing the street at an intersection of sidewalks, being careful not to stretch my legs into a comfortable position for fear of tripping someone who walks by. I have had to say good bye to cool mornings with beautiful sunrises and the gorgeous evening displays as the sun goes to rest for the night. In this world there is nothing constant but change and changes are not always positive, but I do what I must do on my journey to eternity. While I am here, I will enjoy life, counter balancing negatives with positives.

At home I have my chair which I share with Harry who is always welcome even though he is a bit large for a lap cat. I keep whatever book I am reading and my magazines within easy reach. I watch TV in the evening, usually brainless sitcoms as they have the value of not requiring thought. My brain works hard enough just trying to wrap itself around the lunacy and lack of ethics in today's society. Fortunately I am reading a book that lets me spend time in the Middle East thousands of years ago, away from all of the modern turmoil. When I finish this volume, I will find another to take me on a different journey.

My comfort zone, or buffer zone, as you will, can be and is, any distance I wish it to be.