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Stress, stress, stress,
now to relax . . .

Relax, Really? Not completely. I mean who ever gets to truly relax? Even babies stress out over basic needs. Ok, Babies may not know what goes on when they have a basic need, but a baby knows when something needs to happen.

I discovered a benefit at work that may go a long way in reducing some of the stress I sometimes feel. I'm not going to talk much about it, until I get all the details worked out.

On a creative note, it's been kind of a struggle. There's a new card up at Greeting Card Universe, a Valentine's day card with a cat on the front. That card was downright challenging, I don't often draw cats. So I signed up for an AI site, DALL-E 2 and ran through the outline of a cat I had drawn and watercolor painted. I saw some really cute renditions of the cat, but I just didn't feel right about using the cat as the AI gave it to me. Some of the cats came back with a lot of detail. So I used up all my DALL-E 2 credits in about 24 hours, then went to AI apps on the phone. Between all the images that were generated, they were used as a reference and I drew a decent cat.

I have been doodling on a somewhat regular basis. Tried to draw a dog with no reference, it looked like a horse. I wasn't disappointed in the result, just surprised.

A lot of times, my doodles were just that, doodles. I like drawing out words, hand lettering. That happened on some days. Some days I wrote out my feelings, as if it were a journal. But the sketch book is that, an art journal.

Right now I'm not feeling very chatty. It's not easy seeing one's parents fade away. I hope when their time comes, they fade peacefully. Dad is 92. I joke the he's 184, because his birthday is in dispute. His mother said he was born before midnight, and when the doctor filled out the birth certificate, he wrote after midnight. I find it humorous. He would tell me that a person only has one birthday. I found more than two on his paternal grandfather, at least six, maybe more. The birthdays range between 1847 and 1854. My plausible theory is, he was the oldest at home, on the farm. His father and two older brothers were off being soldiers. 1847 and 18 means Civil War fodder. I think the family wanted to keep him out of the war and helping on the farm.

Yes, it's plausible, and whether true or not, I will never find the answer. The most bizarre birthday appears on his tombstone, 1852. One of his younger brothers was also born in 1852, but 2 months apart? Nope, didn't happen.

Genealogy is interesting, so is art based careers hereditary? I kind of think so. I found surveyors in the family tree, two of them somewhat notable, and a famous rumored uncle by marriage. The rumored uncle by marriage is George Washington, a surveyor. This is a rumor, is it true? I have not be able to prove or disprove a family link to George Washington. But, since the rumor still persists, I thank Uncle George when ever I spend money with his image on it. The notables are Samuel S. Lewis, co-founder of Orleans, Indiana. Samuel was the first elected representative to the Republic of Texas government from the Jasper District, also a surveyor. Martin Baty Lewis, a Chief Justice of Jasper County and a surveyor. The family also includes other surveyors, one Alfred J (or I) Shelby. His father was the other Isaac Shelby, the one the does not come up in very many Internet searches. The more popular Isaac Shelby was the first governor of Kentucky. Both Isaacs were first cousins. I believe Gov Isaac was also a surveyor.

Now come forward to me. My art has a perfection gene, I'm trying to break it. Perfection causes me no amount of satisfaction with certain projects. Drawings for example, not perfect, start over. Digital art is easier to deal with, start a new file and try again, or add a new layer. Digital art offers more options when dealing with the perfection gene. And there are projects that get started, and never get finished. I have good reason to break this pattern.

Art should be enjoyable, if you have a creative outlet, don't let anyone poo-poo it. I had someone poo-poo a project just because I wasn't using paint and canvas. I was cross-stitching on paper that I had perforated. I know, I could have bought perforated paper for this kind of work, but I only wanted to see perforations in the part I was going to cross-stitch, not outside the pattern. I thought it was awesome. Another benefit to making my own perforated paper, I can control the size of the cross-stitch pattern. 10 squares per inch, 8 per inch, or 14 per inch.

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