31 July 2025

After publication of last week's issue of "Glimpses of Brillion" a new acronym was introduced into my vocabulary – TAVR. It gets bandied about rather loosely by some but it was a stranger to me, until recently. Transcathiter Aortic Valve Replacement. It may never become a household word like some acronyms, but it is nice to know what it means. As for TAVR in my case, I am still jumping through the preliminary hoops prior to the actual event, which as yet has not been scheduled.

Acronyms have a way of becoming part of our vocabulary, with many becoming household words, like radar and sonar (Radio Detection and Ranging, and Sound Navigation and Ranging). There is one that will surprise many and that is the word posh. The dictionary says it means luxurious and fashionable. The dictionary probably does not know that it really means Port Outbound, Starboard Homebound, an expression that stems from the days of steamship travel, when India was a part of the British Empire, and British citizens wishing to travel to and from India went by steamship, through the Suez Canal. The ideal accommodations were on the shady side of the ship, that is the port side when going toward India and on the starboard side for the return trip, hence "Port Outbound, Starboard Homebound." It may be worth stating for those few who are less nautically inclined that port is left and starboard is right

I received a narrative from a friend who lives in the eastern foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range in Washington, a story that included crossing a stream on a fallen tree that now serves as a makeshift footbridge. The story reminded me of an event that took place on the western slopes of the Cascade Range, and it involved crossing, not a stream, but a beaver pond. It was 1959 when I and a friend named Ernie took up the fine art of tying flies, that is flies for fishing. It is an unalterable fact that I was more skilled than Ernie, but he tried, and by the time trout season opened, we both had a sizable inventory of flies. A major difference was that I caught fish, lots of them, and Ernie never caught one. I kept telling him he has to think like a fish in order to outsmart them, but Ernie never got to that level of thinking.

I had discovered a network of beaver ponds, terraced up a mountain valley, and each pond was inhabited by native born cutthroat trout. When I fished there, I always went home with a limit of nice trout. I was rather secretive about the place, but one day I decided to bring Ernie, because he most assuredly will be able to catch a fish there. We went our separate ways, and I had discovered a hard-to-reach pond, accessible only by crossing a smaller pond, on a sunken log, about ten inches in diameter. As one might expect, the log was slippery from being under water, but by slithering along slowly and carefully, I reached the Utopian waters and landed a beautiful fourteen inch cutthroat trout. I admired the crimson slashes on the underside of its gill covers, and then thought, "This will be enough for today. I will find Ernie and have him fish this priceless spot." When I found Ernie he was still fishless, but I assured him that that would soon be changed, and we went together up the stream bed until we reached the hallowed pond. He was somewhat hesitant about crossing fifteen feet of beaver pond on a sunken log, but I assured him that if he kept his feet close together and minced along slowly, it was very doable and the rewards were waiting in the next pond.

Ernie was a little more than half way across, doing okay, and I watched his progress as he inched along ever so carefully. The next scene occurs only in comic strips. I saw a beaver swimming under water, on Ernie's left, and slightly behind him, coming toward the sunken log. I thought that if I tell him about the beaver, Ernie will turn around and fall off the log, so I merely watched, with the keenest of interest. The beaver swam under the log, behind Ernie, and then came quietly to the surface, with only its head above the water surface. Then the beaver got a broad grin, slapped the water with its tail and dove. The unexpected and loud report was more than Ernie's constitution could handle, and with his flyrod flailing the air, he spun about and toppled into the pond. The water was only neck deep so there was no danger of drowning, but there was most assuredly one very wet and cold Isaac Walton wannabe. It was a quiet ride home. We never fished together again and I don't believe Ernie ever did catch a trout. He probably gave away or junked all of his fishing flies.

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Freedom is Not Free

Frenchy Sends with Warm Regards