



The Bowfin Inquirer



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Headline: Deadlines

by Jerry Lerman (344)

Bad habits are definitely hard to shake. That's no more a headline than 'dog bites man' – we all know that.

When it comes to a bad habit I have, procrastination, there doesn't seem an easy cure. I have put things off for the future ever since I discovered that I had things I could put off. I think I must enjoy this bad habit to some degree, or I'd already have started in on fixing it!

This month my delaying action almost cost me bigtime. The story starts about 20 months ago – pre-Covid-19 when while visiting our daughter, Beth, in Chicago, she showed us her painting-in-progress, the theme of which involved the 1990-91 TV show, "Twin Peaks." Neither Eve nor I had any familiarity with the show, as we were busy with parenting, our jobs, and school (I was in Berkeley's evening MBA program then).

Beth's painting included portraits of several of the show's characters, and the painting's background held representations of Twin Peaks' thematic elements: an owl, a broad zig-zagging line, an upside-down image of the protagonist. During our visit, Beth and we watched the first three episodes on Netflix and while I can't say I was absolutely thrilled by it, I did find it of some interest. A couple of the painting's elements cropped up in those early episodes, but not nearly all of them were explained, so I made a mental note to continue watching the show at some time after returning home.

We didn't have Netflix at that time, so that resolution of mine fell by the wayside. But with the advent of Covid-19, Netflix became kind of a

necessity, and we began a subscription. However, as you probably know there are MANY OTHER shows on Netflix, so it wasn't merely procrastination that kept me from getting back to Twin Peaks – it was the distraction of having so many other good viewing options.

Fast forward to June 20, 2021. I finally thought it might be the time to watch the show and understand the painting. Beth hadn't finished the painting yet (so procrastination might be an inherited trait!), but I'd watch the show – and then discuss with her what I'd learned. I started at season 1, episode 4 – noting that there were only 5 more episodes in season 1 – and then there would be 22 to watch in season 2. Each show runs about 45 minutes, so I figured that by watching three or four episodes a week, I'd be done about the end of July.

As I began watching episode 4, Netflix flashed a small, hard-to-read notification in the top left corner of my screen: "*Last day for viewing Twin Peaks on Netflix: June 30th.*" A deadline! This was daunting news, for now I'd have to see all 27 episodes over a 10-day period. I'd have to compress those "weeks" into "days." Because I had another deadline for the end of the month (for creating this June Bowfin Inquirer), it just might not be possible to do everything. I would have to prioritize.

I did. With a discipline I've rarely put to use since I retired in 2015, I managed to finish the T.P. episodes on June 29th by following a strict 'diet' of three episodes a day. I used some of the in-between time to dream up the idea for this article, so that I could meet my self-imposed BI publishing deadline.

As a result of my meeting Netflix's deadline, I was able to converse with Beth last night about her painting's symbols. (Spoiler alert: the zig-zag line comes into play in the final, very chilling episode.)

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