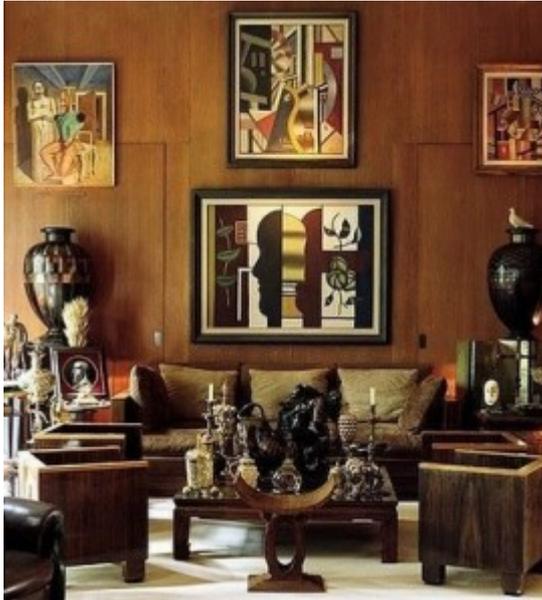


An artful life

*Another “blast from the past” out of my old MySpace blogs.
Read on...*



Today, I'll relate to you some more color on a point I made many posts ago about having a family with a creative bent. Let's select a few of the members and take a look at what I meant.

Starting out with the eldest, my Grandfather (on Dad's side) was an engineer. He was also an inventor. For a while, he worked on projects for the government and the rest of the time his company produced a variety of products for a variety of customers. He was always rigging things himself for the benefit of the family (creating new tools or wiring things just for whatever need we might have).

One of Grandpa's more memorable inventions (at least to me, being a fisherman), was a "live" bait bucket. It was a metal bucket which you could fill with water and then raise the "inner" bucket. As the weight of the water-filled inner bucket slid slowly down, it forced air into the bottom of the bucket through small holes, acting as an aerator in the water, keeping it oxygenated. When the bucket finally reached the bottom, you simply lifted it again and started the process once more. The drop time was substantial, measured in minutes, rather than seconds. A simple, yet amazingly

successful, idea which was good for keeping either bait or caught fish alive. No batteries required. Grandpa eventually sold the patent on the bucket and I think modern versions are made of plastic.

Once Grandpa retired, he was too much of a tinkerer to do nothing, so he took up a variety of challenges. He dabbled at sculpting, doing likenesses of people, primarily, in smallish busts or figurines (under 12", as I recall). Another artistic endeavor he tried out was wire craft. He used copper wire and created some amazing art which he then framed and, on some occasions, wired lighting into it for effect. I have two of his ships he made, with extraordinary detail in the sails and hull. Alas, the lights on the larger one are long since out.

Grandpa had a multitude of talents that provided for his family and then, when he hung up his shingle permanently, he just morphed those previous skills into new talents to keep his active mind and hands busy.

Mom was another impressive source of creativity. I've mentioned earlier that she was a florist for 30 years. She started out in life in textile design, way back when, contributing dress designs down in old Miami (back when it wasn't so old).

Over the course of many years, I saw Mom come up with a wide range of artistic efforts, from tile work, to pattern design to painting. Mom used acrylic paints mostly, and her work always seemed to be leaning towards those images that would allow her a wide display of colors. The subject was usually secondary to her pleasure in using and blending colors, I believe. I have some interesting Mondrian-like studies she did, a matching two-piece set, that offers an intriguing flashback to her more scholarly days from art school and design.

My sister has a bunch of artistic talent that has ranged over

the years in many media. Like me, she took to drawing very early. Unlike me, however, she was able to expand to many more creative expressions (I've never made it out of pencil and ink). She has done some cool stuff in clay work (I remember fondly an awesome Darth Vader head she fired up in the kiln). Another gifted talent was in sewing and stitching, making me many neat items in the past as well as allowing her to test the cyber waters of eBay with some of her creations. And, in a nod to Mom, she did some painting too. Not, perhaps, as seriously or repeatedly as Mom, but she has talent in that area too.

I see now her daughters, my nieces, seem to have got a piece of that creative talent. While they don't show me as much as they used to, there is a wonderful, unpolished drawing skill there that is waiting to be explored if the bug bites them. My elder niece took a shine to pottery and her work has been varied and imaginative.

In the meantime, I have a piece of creativity from nearly everyone in the family (including me, I suppose). Now I have to figure out where I can display it in the home. I may need to invest in different frames for some of the pieces in order to have them "fit" better, but I am ever loathe to change anything in an artist's vision, including the frame.

So, I've genetics to thank for my own creative bent (including Grams' skill with word games that ultimately led me to writing). I look forward to seeing how my nieces carry forward that gift into their futures.