

My never-ending battle with ennui, part 2



Welcome to the second half of my overly long return to blogging...and active life in general. This is my never-ending battle with ennui, part 2. I'm forcing you to go through these "introductory" blog posts before we get to the good stuff.

Admittedly, that's a relative qualitative statement, but, hey, you're here reading this. As Obi Wan said, who's the more foolish, the fool, or the fool who follows him?

And with that warm beginning, read on...

My never-ending battle with...nature?

When I first moved into this home, I was a fit and trim 30-something lad full of vim and vigor. Now approaching 60, the

fit is tighter, the trim is gone and the vim and vigor are just hanging on.



Workin' the land

Another victim of this dreary period has been my front landscaping. I showed initiative enough to kill off all the wild vegetation out front of my house (check this link). But, I haven't sealed the deal by doing something with the space.

As such, nature has decided to make those decisions for me. We'll get to one shortly, but something needs to be done with the black mulch, rocks and a half-dead tree.

That means spending on a real landscaper (because I nearly killed myself with simply eliminating the vegetation that was there).

That also means possibly dealing with the Homeowner's Association and their silly "Architectural Committee". I will likely just schedule the job without their permission and point to the pretty finished product if they complain.

I'm thinking I might even just go for plain sod, nothing else. I can still make that work just fine for Halloween and everything else would just require water.

Just because I wrote some books with ants in it...

Over the quarter century I've lived in this home, I've had a tacit agreement with the critters of my neighborhood. Be fruitful and multiply all you want outside the house and stay

outside the four walls.

For the most part, the pact has been kept. Any critter that found its way inside, I scooped into my “rescue cup” (basically a big plastic cup) and returned outside. That included lizards, large ants and even a stray little frog.

Only two critters caused an immediate and fatal response from me: roaches and wasps. Everyone else, I left alone (including the random moth or spider). And everyone lived happily ever after.



Only slightly smaller than in this image.

Until recently. Recently, I have been getting more and more large ants in my office. There is still some debate as to whether they are carpenter ants or “big head” ants, but they are sizable. And, yes, I’ve got another old blog post to explain more. Who’d a thunk it?

These were intruding on my office to the tune of a dozen or two a week. A week! I used to have an ant or so a month, at most.

Finding peace in being a mass murderer

Yes, my bug spray left most of them sprawled dead on the floor, but still. And, occasionally, as I was typing, one would startle me by climbing up the wall in front of me. Or it would catch my eye as a moving shadow on my dark wood desk. Ick.

And yes, I did “rescue” those live ones and place them

outside. But, the mental and spiritual damage had been done. They broke the pact and I finally relented and called in professional pest control.

Now, mind you, I made sure to go with one that uses environmentally safe formulas. Considering they are employed in killing living things, I think that's somewhat of an oxymoron.

And, what do you know, while the pest control expert is outside killing ants, they are all fleeing inside. How wonderful.

Turns out, my home remodelers from 10 years ago never caulked the baseboards in the office. Given South Florida construction and the general ingenuity of insects, it was party time in the JMD home office.

A trip to Walmart and a few dollars worth of caulk later and I'm mostly sealed up. Combined with my environmentally safe mass murder, I haven't seen an ant in the office for the past two weeks.

What's cooking?

For the past few months, nothing.

Another goal fallen to the wayside in my never-ending battle with ennui has been my cooking challenge.

I've actually been doing well on that during this extended period of meh-ness, but recently that has tapered off, too.

I need to refocus on getting some of those tasty dishes I've never cooked into my battle plan. And I need to seriously inventory my cooking tools and start filling in the holes/replacing weak spots.

Let's see if I can squeeze a new recipe in for July. That should kick-start me back into the cooking challenge. I really

enjoyed it (though not the cleanup) and can't even say why I seemed to just forget about it. Weird.

Putting an end to my never-ending battle with ennui

So, yeah, that's just a few of the alarming battles I've been losing to ennui. There are actually more, but they are of smaller scale and, really, this blog post is already one day too long.

I can't put my finger on why I'm suddenly feeling "spry" again. Or why I have such an optimistic expectation that I'm bringing my never-ending battle with ennui to a close.

It could be that the anticipation of a big road trip next year has reignited my initiative and energy levels. While being a hermit is something I'm just fine with, being blah is not. Perhaps I've just been experiencing a longer period of "the blahs" than most people.

Whatever the case, look for more blog posts, projects and actual physical movement from my blogs, website and writing.

And while you do that, I'll be keeping a watchful eye. I may have an action plan to beat it back currently, but the war is not over. I don't call it a *never-ending* battle with ennui for fun.