

# E-SUETERRY-C

November 9, 2009

HUMOR  
INSPIRATION  
IDEAS  
MUSIC  
SAXOPHONE  
INTELLIGENCE  
JAZZ  
TAIJI QUAN



HOW  
THE HAM  
FAT DO YOU SAY  
THIS?  
'ESOTERIC'  
'E-SOOTERICY'  
WHATEVER

## LIFE IN THE OUTBACK

Bill Phillips gave me a book last year that I just re-read. It's called "Mutant Message Down Under" and purports to be a quasi-autobiographical tale of an American woman going on walkabout with a tribe of Aborigines in Australia in the 80's. The book was quite controversial when it came out in the early 90's, rather on the order of the brouhaha surrounding Carlos Castaneda in the decades prior: Truth, or fiction? My take on Castaneda was that it didn't matter whether or not the stories were true, because the teachings contained within were valid regardless of the veracity of the plot of the books. I feel the same way about Marlo Morgan's "Mutant Message".

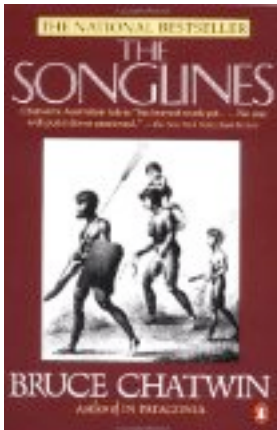
The Australian Aboriginal culture--between 40,000 and 60,000 years old--is the oldest continuous culture in the world. The title of the book refers to how the Real People tribe describes Morgan, and non-Aborigines in general: mutants, the lot of 'em. In this mini-review, I'll share a few of the more noteworthy and unusual Real People customs.

I must admit that some of the tribal ways described in the book rather appealed to me--except, perhaps, eating live worms (though Morgan gets hers flame-broiled, making them a bit more palatable). First of all, as members of the tribe learn and develop new abilities throughout life, they get to change their names to reflect that. This really resonated with me because I always thought it was stupid to have to use the same name your whole life--one that you didn't even choose. When one of them wants to change his or her name, the Real People don't have any of the cumbersome red tape that we have here. *I'm reminded of the story of a certain man--we'll call him Joe--who brought all the paperwork for changing his name into the courtroom only to have the judge go on a diatribe against name-changing. Finally the judge said, "What's your name, anyway?" "Joe Shit," the man replied. "Oh, okay. Well, what do you want to change it to?" "Frank Shit," says the man.*

The Real People feel the purpose of the voice is for singing, celebrating and healing, not for mundane things like arguing about politics and ordering Chinese take-out. Therefore, they communicate via mental telepathy. Because everyone can read each other's minds, there's no lying or deceitful conduct. It saves a lot of wear and tear on the old vocal cords, plus, there's no dropped calls!

## CON'T

Music is considered "medicine". Medicine is defined as "anything good that contributes to the welfare of the group". There's no



shlepping instruments around, either. When they want to have a concert, natural materials are used to make percussion instruments, [didgeridoos](#) and bells, and of course there is always singing. "A musician carries the music within him. He needs no specific instrument. He is the music." There is no written language, so songs are used to measure distance and time, and to record the history of the tribe. This is the meaning of "[songlines](#)", a term you may have heard before. British writer Bruce Chatwin's 1988 book *The Songlines* documents his personal journey into the outback in order to research these ancient navigational paths.

A lot of my friends have birthdays this year.\* On the subject of birthday parties, again I must agree with these Down Under folks. To them, celebration means something special has occurred. "There's nothing special about getting older--it just happens." Instead, celebrations take place "to acknowledge the person's talent, contribution to the community, personal and spiritual growth."

In the outback, there's no chocolate cake or banana splits.

They eat whatever shows up that day, and are very glad to receive it. If you're wondering about Christmas, there isn't one. In fact, there are no set holidays at all! (If we adopted that idea here, we'd eliminate the traffic jams and road rage caused by every single person in the tri-state area converging on the Merritt Parkway on Thanksgiving Day.)

The Real People's concept of land belonging to everyone is shared by most Native American tribes of the past (but just try to get your hands on a piece of Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun--you'll find yourself tossed out the teepee within ten beats of the tom tom).

I do read,  
and  
welcome,  
your  
comments!

[HERE](#)

This makes a lot of sense. How can someone own the Earth? The land wasn't made by a company; you can't take out a patent on it. And while we're on the subject, I've never understood how it can be illegal to own a plant [insert your favorite illegal botanical here].

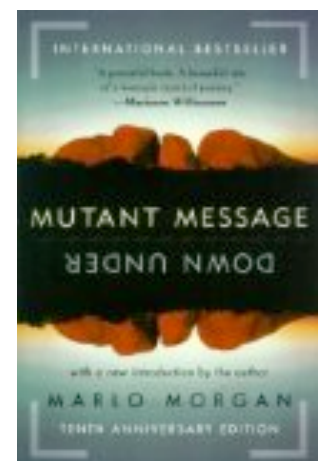
The Real People don't say Grace at meals, because they spend the whole day being grateful. They live to be 120 or 130, and when they're done with the planet and want to "[return to forever](#)", they ask the spirits if it is for the highest good, then they call for a celebration of their life. The following words are said to a tribe member at both the end and the beginning of life: "We love you and support you on the journey". Would someone please say that to me when I'm dying?

After the party, the person goes into the desert, sits down in the sand, shuts down the body systems, and is gone in two minutes. The remains are food for wild animals and birds. No mess, no fuss.

Morgan's walkabout experience lasts for three months. When she emerges into 'civilization', you can imagine how she looks. Since she wasn't into being cleansed daily by desert flies, she doesn't smell too good either. Hence the less-than-enthusiastic reaction from the first people she meets upon stumbling out of the bush.

She comments: "Yesterday I had everything I needed: food, clothing, shelter, health care, companions, music, entertainment, support, a family, and lots of joyful laughter--all free...Today, unless I begged for money, I could not function. Everything required to exist had to be purchased...I was at this moment reduced to a filthy, tattered beggar...Only I knew the truth of the person contained within this exterior of poverty and grime."

If you've got eyes to try it sometime, just know that walkabouts ain't for sissies. Bon



voyage--we love you and support you on your journey!

\* Just seeing if you're paying attention.  
Happy birthday Will Zachmann!

[Click here for info on this event in Vilcabamba, Ecuador](#)

# Celebration of the Arts/Fiesta de las Artes: Awakening the Creative Spirit Within

Montesueños-Vilcabamba-Dec. 12-13, 2009

With Sue Terry, Meredith Miller and Brian O'Leary

Come celebrate with us the end of our first year @ Montesueños (no prior experience needed, all are welcome and bring your cameras):

- Creativity & Healing through Sound & Movement
- Pig Puppet Theatre—socio-political satire with your alter egos
- Visual encounters with architecture, grounds and colorful skies
- Slide show of an artist's 50-year evolution
- Procession and ceremony for planetary healing
- Jazz workshop
- Yoga and Qi Gong

**Sue Terry** is a world-class performer and teacher of jazz and movement

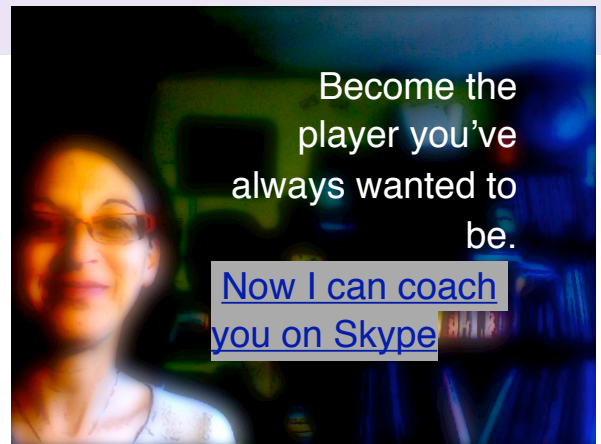
**Meredith Miller** is a visionary artist whose paintings have inspired thousands of collectors

**Brian O'Leary** is a photographer, jazz pianist, puppeteer, and yoga teacher

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**November 22 & 29:** Sweet Sue plays with Micaela Leon and Adrienne Haan in "Narzissa & Goldmund: a decadent musical voyage through 1920's Berlin Cabaret."

[The Metropolitan Room](#), New York City, 4:00 pm

**Tuesday, Dec. 1:** THE LAST TAPESTRY SHOW FOR AWHILE! ["Tapestry Rewoven" returns to Iridium](#), New York City, with shows at 8 pm and 10.

**December 12 & 13:**

Sue presents a workshop on Creativity & Movement at Montesuenos Eco Retreat Center, Vilcabamba, Ecuador (visit link above for photos and info on this utterly amazing place, and its equally amazing founders Dr. Brian O'Leary and Meredith Miller.) Come to Montesuenos and see why more and more North Americans are moving to South America.