



*Discover. Learn. Enjoy.*

## **2008 My Next Chapter First Prize Winner Walter Inge**

“My Next Chapter”

In his dotage King Lear vowed, “to shake all cares and business from our age, Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburthened crawl toward death.”

Not me. Having passed my allotted three score and ten I am probably even older than Lear, but I have no intention of crawling anywhere, least of all toward death. I plan to stand upright for five score or more and look toward a bright future.

I am far from wealthy, but my retirement income and savings keep me comfortable. But the prospect of joining the codgers staring vacantly from their park benches as their minds crawl toward senility leads me to make sure as I turn to the next chapter of my life I do not find a blank page.

Air Force navigator in Bermuda, Turkey, and Viet Nam. Science officer in London. College professor in Boston and at the Air Force Academy. NASA researcher in Atlanta. Medical School professor in Grenada. Just what aspect of that varied background could fill my new chapter with meaning? Maybe return to university teaching? No. I enjoyed the academic life but the red tape and politics made for a less than ecstatic experience. Ditto for research. And unless our present wars get interminable the Air Force is not going to call a geezer back to active duty.

I’ve thought many months about this. (Staring vacantly from my park bench). Where can I put whatever talents I have to the best use without being concerned about a paycheck?

Recalling my time in Grenada I had my answer. I’d met some outstanding Americans there serving in the Peace Corps & they told of long hours, poor pay, marginal living conditions, but an exhilarating feeling of accomplishment beyond anything else they had done. Several of them were on their second or third Peace Corps tour. They sold me.

My next chapter is about to be written.