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MARCH 2024

St. Some Times

I **MUST** go **DIVING!**



I need a beer. I
need bacon.

Get me Outta
here!

Ramadan Again

INTERMITTANT FASTING



What? It's EASTER?



Easter Sunday was a workday. The most important topic right now on the island is the end of Ramadan and celebrating Eid. That means company vacation, our "Spring Break". Easter was just another working day. No egg hunt. No baskets. Nada.

Oh well. I was never a big fan of Easter. I should have gone to the early underground Church service, but that was at 5am and I completely forgot. Eric had invited me too. I like going to the church services. Makes me feel more connected and human in this bubble within Islam.

Luckily, I remembered to call dad and play Easter music! Long story.

Thanks Katherine

Katherine left me a mini-hydroponic system. It sat for half of the year before I planted flowers. Aha. Yes, That is the first Treasure-Flower my "brown thumb" has ever nurtured. I usually kill off house plants.



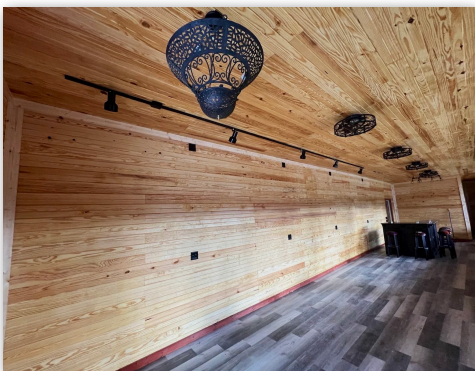
Carnations?

According to my new plant app, the purple ones are *Dianthus Chinensis* - Japanese Pinks. The package had no identifying information - generic. These have been growing since January 9, 2024. Wassup?



BSS Soft Opening?

It still isn't time to make many announcements. I just cannot. But look at that Hillbilly in the leading pic!



Black Sea Shines is located just 4 miles out of Branson, Missouri on Highway 13. We aren't "on the map" just yet. Still working on it. I say we because I'm a small partner and active investor in this adventure. You'll hear about us very soon!

Every piece of this "symphony" is planned out well in advance. The sipping room (left) was finished by an Amish crew of wood craftsmen. I cannot wait to step in there and sip on the variety of bottles.

David and Dale have been working long work weeks for the past two years to build Black Sea Shines from the ground up. It was/is no easy task. Yet the dream is coming alive. It's time to start making money rather than spending it!

David and I have had weekly meetings for the past two years. It's all in the details. But those won't be shared by me. Some day, details will abound! There will certainly be a soft opening this April or May. We'll be saying "Hello world!".

Lemoines in Belize

Nope, that's not my vessel.
But I know someone that
owns and operates it!

Wanna go?

I can point you in the right
direction.

Sleeps 5 couples. Comes with a
Captain and a Chef. See the
Caribbean in style.



“I REALLY WANT A DIVING HOLIDAY”



I have felt this way.....

since January of 2023.

Mother, mother Ocean

I have heard your call.

The Carpe Vita is the third of the Carpe Diem Maldives fleet. She was built in the Maldives like the Carpe Diem and the Carpe Novo. But she is the newest. Will she be the sweetest?

I reached out to Munkko, the director of Diving, but he will be on the Diem while I am on the Vita. No problem. I trust all of their dive teams and crew!

I am scheduled to arrive for trip #9 on April 11th, after my usual trip. The only difference, besides the ship choice, will be two nights in Male' prior to the trip. Our company holiday (paid days) start on the 9th, so I decided to leave early out of the desert. I booked a super cheap hotel in the Capital city, Male, for two nights. This is a new twist. Usually, I sit in the airport for an hour

or two and we board the ship. Not this time!

Perhaps I will explore the city for the first time. I never have. It seems like any other capital city: bustling, dirty, loud.

My take on it is business. Tourism is the name of the game. Beach bungalows and diving Live-a-boards are what allow this island nation to survive. Male is the nerve center, and I don't think it's very pretty - so to speak. But, I'll explore and let you know.

I suspect a lot of traffic. Trash everywhere. And don't forget, I am arriving during Eid - the festival after the month of Ramadan. The Maldivians are predominantly Muslim so the vibe of the city might be on fire! Fingers crossed that it is.

If my friends were in the city, I'd reach out. All of them are on the Carpe fleet diving. Then again, I'm due for a bit of "down time". Relaxing in a hotel with a few thousand beers isn't such a bad idea.

I might even order some pizzas to go with all the beer. I've been dry (as in alcohol) for three full months and eating healthy. Beer and pizza sounds too good to be true.

See what I mean by my equilibrium being "off"?

I can't wait to dig into my dive suitcase again. Maybe the weekend before the trip will be a good time to check my gear, organize a few clothes, and make sure I have the right adapters and currency ready to go. Ooh. Time to call Mansour - my driver and friend!

Almost Over



This pause (in diving) reminds me of Covid. No Diving.

I haven't been in the water for almost a year and a half. The longest pause since the Covidation of 2020!

A friend knew I was feeling a bit "unbalanced", so she sent me this picture from back then. A different colleague had photocopied their "finger" to cheer me up back then. And like a phoenix, the "finger" comes to light again and brings me out of my funk. Imagine what actual

Maldives diving does for my state of equilibrium! Divine. I just have to make it to April 10th. Then I'm on the first thing smokin'.

It has been a long Ramadan this year. I've been fasting (food not water) during the days. Consider it a form of intermittent fasting like some of you are attempting. I've been successful! Maybe not losing weight, but successfully losing my mind! smile

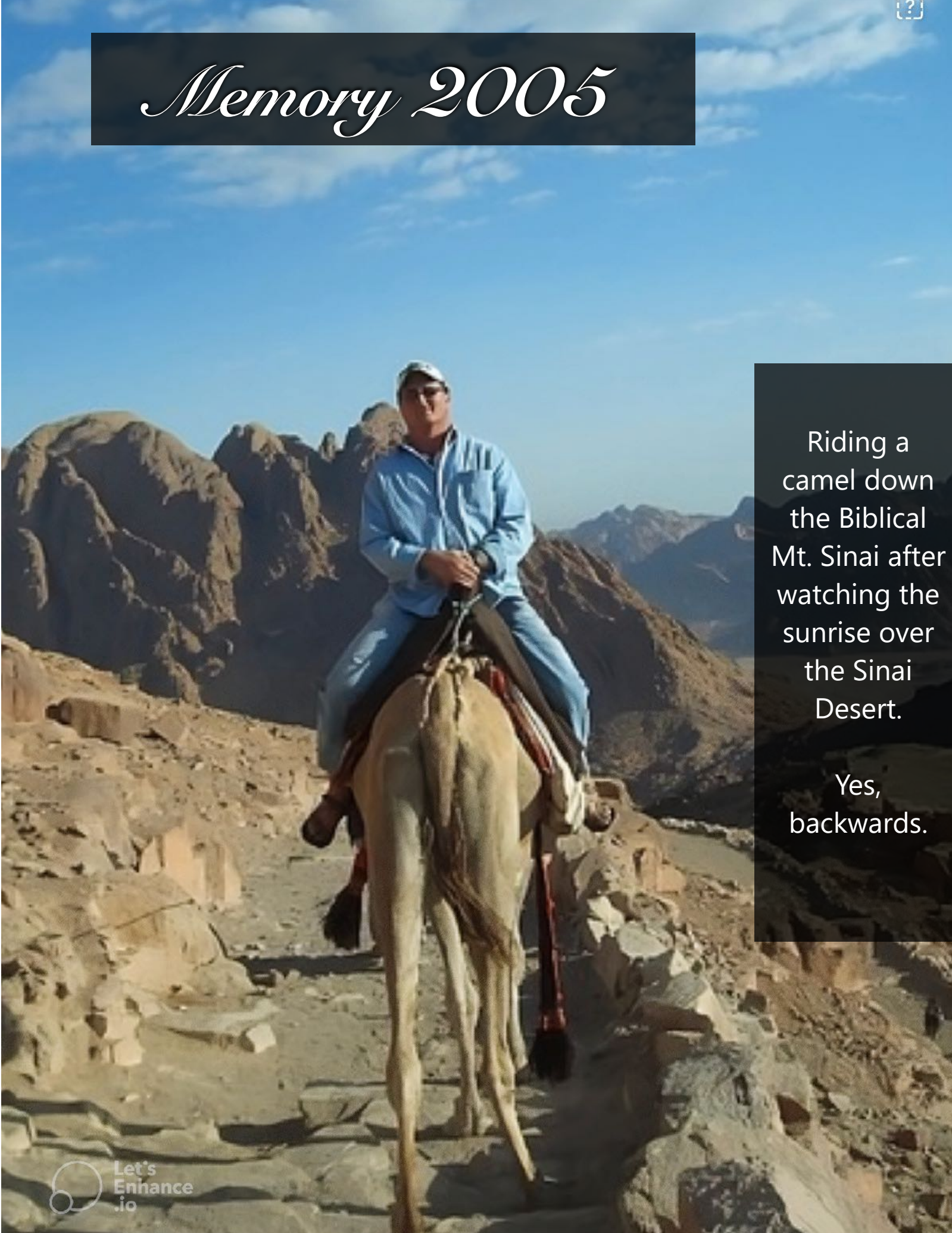
Ramadan Notes

- ▶ A month Long
- ▶ Almost everything is closed during the day
- ▶ Sleepy kids. Lots of drowsy, dangerous drivers
- ▶ students go home an hour early each day (fewer classes) but staff stays 'til 4pm as usual
- ▶ no eating or drinking openly (to honor the Muslims that are fasting)





Memory 2005



Riding a camel down the Biblical Mt. Sinai after watching the sunrise over the Sinai Desert.

Yes, backwards.